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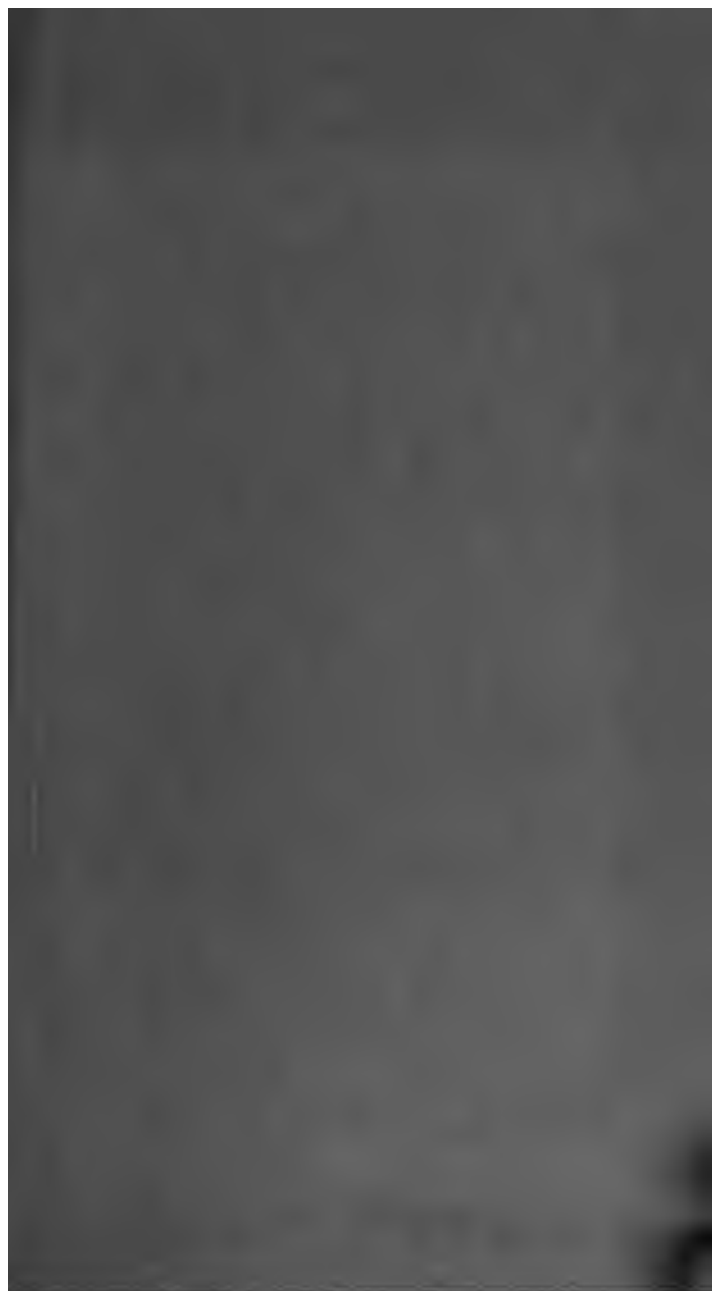
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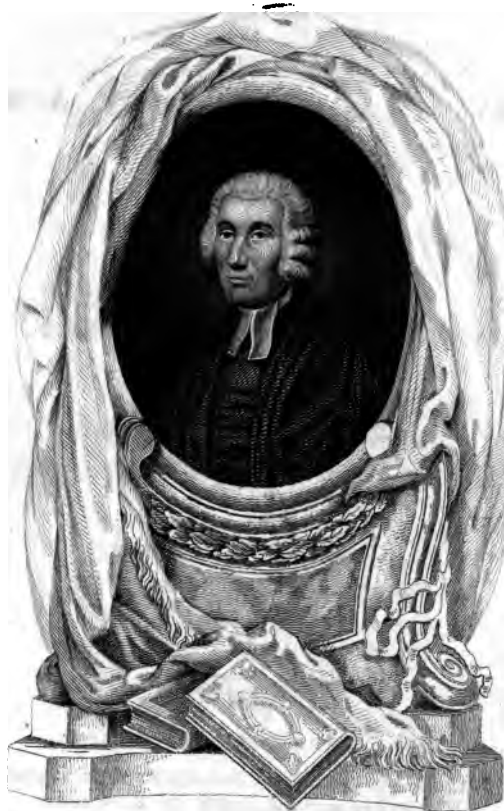






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REV. W. ROMANE A.M.

PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM G. & S. GLASGOW

SELECT LETTERS

OF THE

REV. WILLIAM ROMAINÉ, A. M.

WITH

AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

BY

THOMAS CHALMERS, D. D.

PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

GLASGOW:

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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

IN our former Essay to Mr. Romaine's Treatises on the Life, Walk, and Triumph of Faith, we observed, that the great and unceasing topics on which he delighted to expatiate were, the atoning blood and perfect righteousness of Christ, as forming the great and only foundation of his hope and of his confidence towards God. These important doctrines of the Christian faith, form the no less favourite and oft-recurring theme which pervades, and is diffused through the whole texture of the excellent Letters of which the present Volume is composed. And though they may not be fitted to stimulate the understanding, or to regale the fancy of the merely intellectual reader; yet, to the simple-hearted and spiritually-minded Christian, these precious and consoling truths, however frequently presented, will be felt in all the freshness and power of their peace-speaking, holy, and regenerating influence. In this respect, he imitated the example of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, who expressed his determination to know nothing among his people "save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

We have frequently insisted on one great claim that the doctrine of Christ crucified has upon our attention; namely, that, by the knowledge of it, we obtain deliverance from the greatest calamity which hangs over our species; and that is, the curse of God's violated law, with all the pains and penalties which are consequent thereupon. We shall, in our following observations, advert to another mighty claim which the same doctrine has upon our attention; namely, that, by the knowledge of it, we farther obtain the meritorious, or the rightful possession of God's favour; so that we do not simply enter upon the bliss of eternity as having become ours in fact, and by a mere deed of generosity, but we enter upon it as having become ours in equity, and by a deed of justice. Through Christ crucified we acquire a title to heaven as our reward, and that as much as if we ourselves had done that stipulated work, for which heaven was rendered to us as the stipulated wages: and this is a very different footing from that of the bare conveyance of a gift, for it is a conveyance that is secured and shielded by the guarantees of a covenant; so as to make it, not a mere act of mercy, but an act of righteousness for God to bestow; and we, in receiving, lay hold not merely of a donative, but also of our due.

Now, there are many who do not perceive that this second privilege, of being instated, through Christ crucified, in a righteousness before God, is essentially distinct from the former privilege, that of being delivered from guilt. They contemplate the whole of a sinner's reconciliation with God, as *one general benefit* coming out of the atonement

that has been rendered for him on the cross, and which does not admit of being severed into parts, as has been done by the adepts of an artificial and scholastic theology. They are not disposed to look separately to our being freed from condemnation, and so rescued from hell; and to our being vested with a positive righteousness, and so made the rightful heirs and expectants of heaven. They would rather abide by their habit of viewing the gift that is by Jesus Christ as one and indivisible; and regard the attempt to decompose it into ingredients, more as a subtilty of human invention, than as the dictate of a mind that has been soundly and scripturally informed. And thus would they treat lightly the distinction that has been so much urged by some theologians, between the passive and the active obedience of Christ; or between the efficacy of the one to redeem from the incurred penalty, and the efficacy of the other to reinstate in the forfeited reward; between the tendency of his sufferings to avert all the wrath of the Divinity, and so to turn away from us the displeasure under which we lay, and the tendency of his services to restore to us the forfeited reward, and so transfer to us, for whom these services were undertaken, God's favour and kindness, as much as if they had been rendered in our own person and by our own performances. This attempt to mark off the mediatorship of Christ into two great departments, has been branded as an attempt to be wise above that which is written; and, when pursued into the still greater nicety of endeavouring to trace and to follow it throughout the line of demarcation that is betwixt them, then has the whole speculation

been denounced as one that ministers questions of strife rather than of godly edifying, and to which we cannot turn aside, without being involved in perverse disputings, and the jangling of vain controversy.

Now, we fully participate in this dislike at all such metaphysics of theology, as minister nothing in the way of comfort, or of direction, or of salutary influence to the plain mind of a plain and practical inquirer. And therefore we shall attempt nothing at present that is not quite broad and palpable, and shall avoid every thing that would require an eye of very minute or microscopic discrimination. It may be a matter of no great usefulness so to arrange and to classify the privileges of a believer, as accurately to refer each to the distinct services by which Christ hath insured it for those who put their trust in him. But surely it is of importance to know what these privileges are, and for this purpose to make them the objects, if not of any acute or subtile exercise of the understanding, at least of simple enumeration. And we should feel as if much had been left untold, were we not made to know that Christ hath brought in an everlasting righteousness, as well as finished transgressions and made an end of sins—that he hath won for us the reward of heaven, as well as averted from us the vengeance of hell—that he hath not only redeemed us from the sentence of death, but hath built up for us a title unto life everlasting—that, besides expunging our name from the book of condemnation, he hath graven it in the book of life—that, instead of standing before God simply as acquitted creatures, and therefore preserved from the place of condemnation, we stand before him in the robe of another's

righteousness, and therefore with the investiture of such an order of merit, as makes it fit that we should be translated to a high place of favour and of dignity. We want not to probe and to penetrate into the hidden intricacies of the question. But surely, if to be simply dismissed from the bar at which we stood as arraigned criminals be one thing, and it be another to be thence preferred to a title of renown, or to some station wherewith happiness and honour await us near the palace of our sovereign, then it concerns us to know that there is a justification as well as an atonement; that there is a righteousness as well as a redemption; that Christ hath done more than advance us to the negative or midway condition of mere innocence; that he hath wrought out for us a mightier transition than to a state of exemption from the torments of the accursed; that he hath not only retrieved our condition, but hath reversed it, utterly changing the character of our eternity, and turning it from an eternity of torment to an eternity of triumph—having both borne the full weight of our sufferings by taking on himself the guilt of our sins, and having given us of his own righteousness, as our passport and title-deed to the glories of paradise.

And this view is not without warrant and authority from Scripture. The redemption which is through the blood of Christ is the forgiveness of sins. The righteousness of Christ, which is made to rest on all who believe, brings along with it a title to positive favour, which is something more than forgiveness. The creditor who cancels our debt, does us a distinct and additional good, when, furthermore, he puts the deeds or the documents into our hands

by which we are constituted the rightful claimants of any given property. And so Christ, in one place, is represented as a surety for the sins of those who believe in him; and in another, as having purchased for them an inheritance, to which they, and they alone, have the right of entry and of possession. Moreover, we read of Christ being "delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification;" or, that by his death he made atonement for sin; and by his resurrection he re-entered heaven, and is there employed in preparing those mansions by which are rewarded the righteousness of those who believe in him. One fruit of the mediation of Christ is said to be peace with God. But not only so, writes the Apostle; in addition to having drawn back his hostility, he sends forth upon us his loving-kindness. And hence another fruit of the mediation is, that we have access to the grace wherein we stand. Yet it must be owned, that, notwithstanding the real distinction which there is between release from a penalty and admittance to a positive reward, and the corresponding distinction that has been made by theologians, between the passive obedience of Christ, by which it is held that the one has been averted, and the active obedience of Christ, by which it is held that the other has been rightfully earned for us,—it must be owned, we say, notwithstanding, that it is the obedience of Christ unto the death which seems to have formed the main price, not only of all the immunities, but of all the privileges that believers enjoy. It was from his death that the incense of a sweet-smelling savour arose unto God. It was because of his death that God highly exalted him, and

gave him a name above every name. It was from the grave that he ascended, rich in the spoils of a superabundant merit, wherewith he decks and dignifies all his followers. And thus there is not only a remission, but a righteousness that has been wrought out by the expiation on the cross. It was there that he became sin for us, though he knew no sin ; and it was also in virtue of what has been done there, that we are made the righteousness of God in him. The hope of our glory, as well as the price of our deliverance, stands connected with the knowledge of Jesus Christ and him crucified.

We affirm it to be of the very essence of gospel mercy, that, instead of a mere demonstration of Heaven's love, there went along with it a full demonstration of Heaven's righteousness—that it rendered glory to the law, and by the very act wherewith it rendered grace unto those who had trampled on the law. The forgiveness that is unto the sinner under this dispensation, bears upon it an awful character of sacredness and majesty—seeing that it never could have issued on a guilty world but through the channel of a consecrated priesthood, and with the blood of a divine expiation. There is pity on high to the children of men—but it is pity enshrined in holiness, and to which there is no other way of access than by the safeguards of a government that is unchangeable. We cannot come unto the throne of grace but through a mediatorship, where at once may be seen the manifested truth and vindicated justice of the Godhead—nor can we obtain the compassion of our offended Lawgiver, without knocking at the door of a sanctuary, where dwell, in still un-

violated purity and greatness, all the wondrous attributes that belong to him.

Now, this is what we hold to be the leading and the characteristic peculiarity of the dispensation under which we live. All that we receive is, doubtless, in the way of a gift—and yet it is a gift for which a price has been rendered, so as to make it legally and rightfully ours. The penalty is remitted to us, but not till it was paid down, as it were, by another's sufferings. Heaven has been granted to us, but not till it was purchased by another's services. So that the believer has not merely privileges simply and gratuitously conferred upon him; but he is invested with a right to these privileges. He can lay claim to them as a thing of obligation—not in virtue of any equivalent that has been rendered by himself, but in virtue of a full equivalent that has been rendered by another. When eternal life is bestowed upon us, it is not in the shape of a bare donative, the fruit of a movement of generosity alone. It is a reward granted to us on consideration of a righteousness, although that righteousness is not properly and personally ours. Still, it is the fulfilment of a stipulation—the implementing of a contract or a covenant between parties; and when man enters upon his blissful eternity, he only takes possession of that which is his due, and which God hath bound himself, as by the conditions of a treaty, to award unto him.

And here it is of importance to mark—how much more secure our hope of heaven is, when laid upon such a foundation. Had the sinner nothing else to build upon than the single attribute of mercy,

well might he dread the outbreking upon his person of the other attributes, and feel the perpetual disturbance of fears and of jealousies in his bosom, as he bethought him of the majesty of God, and the unchangeable recoil of a nature that could hold no fellowship with evil. Now, how it must overrule these terrors, when, with the righteousness of Christ as a plea put into his hand, he now finds even the most menacing attributes of the Divinity enlisted on the side of his salvation. Were his hopes suspended singly on the pity of God, while the question of all his other perfections was yet undisposed of, there would still be room in the sinner's heart for many doubts and many disquietudes. But how it must allay all these, and what firmness it must give to his anticipations of heaven, when, instead of vaguely trusting for it to the indulgence of God, he in Christ hath acquired a distinct and a well-defined right to it. He is like the man who at first eyed some beautiful estate with fond and foolish expectation, because of the reported generosity of him who owned it—but who afterwards had the title-deed put into his hand, on which he might challenge the property as his own, and step into the secure and undisputed possession of it. And thus may a Christian look forward to heaven. He can plead a right for it. He can argue in his behalf a purchase-money that is commensurate to the purchase. He can speak of a value that has been given, and which is adequate to the value that he expects. And he lives beneath his privileges—he is insensible to the whole worth and security of his condition, if his spirit do not rest and be at ease among the guarantees of a

sure and a well-ordered covenant—and if, while he rejoices in the gift of his coming inheritance, he do not fortify his trust by thinking well of the soundness and the equity of his claim to it.

But while we like to say every thing to a believer that should minister to the stability of his confidence, we would say nothing that could minister to his pride, or excite a sense of haughty independence in his bosom. It is not as if he defied God, and entered with him on a field of litigation. It is not as if he challenged, and with a tone of resolute assertion, that which he felt to be rightfully his own, and demanded it accordingly. What might disarm him of this spirit altogether is, that though now possessed of a right to the citizenship of heaven, the right was not won by himself, but conferred upon him by a Mediator. It is not an inherent, but a derived privilege, and for which he stands indebted to another's bounty. What, we ask, are the suitable feelings with which he ought to prosecute his claim upon God, when, in fact, God was the Being who furnished him with this claim against himself? God so loved the world, as to send his Son into it, that he might legalize a place and a possession in heaven for all who believe on him. Should the lordly proprietor make over to a tenant at will the privilege of a perpetual occupation, and give him secure and rightful possession of all the requisite title-deeds, and furnish him out of his own hand with the materials of such a plea or legal argument as might insure him against all opposition: all this goes to vest him with the power of challenging for his own, that which has been conferred upon him by another. But

this, so far from impairing the character of what he has gotten as a gift, only serves to complete and to enhance it, and should humble him the more into the gratitude and admiration of so noble a benefactor. And so of all that we obtain by the Gospel. It is a gift all over; and though it includes titles as well as benefits, let it ever be remembered, that they are not titles that we have earned, but titles that have been bestowed upon us. It is the thought of this that should rectify our carriage towards God. It is true, that by the economy of the New Testament, they who believe have a right to the honours of immortality. But the right has been given. It has generously and gratuitously descended from above; and they on whom it hath alighted, while they rejoice in the security thereof, still walk before God with the modesty of his gifted dependants. So far from being arrogant, because of the claim wherewith they have been invested, it only serves as another topic of humility and thankfulness. They appear before God in a robe of righteousness, but they know that it is a robe of his putting on. In his presence they wear an order of merit, but what they wear another hath won—the mead of another’s services—the fruit of the travail of another’s soul. They feel the whole security of an unquestionable right without its arrogance, and are at once high in the conscious possession of their great prerogative, and humble under the feeling that they are debtors for it all. The reward is a gift; for the righteousness which hath earned the reward is a gift also. Heaven may at first be thought of, not as a present but as a purchase; but it is the more emphatically a present, that

by another's purchase it has become justly and legally theirs. It is this which gives its specific character to the economy of the Gospel. It is free in the distribution of its blessings; yet, ere the blessings are granted, there must be granted a right to the possession of them—and the sinner, having no such right in his own person, must derive it from abroad, and owe that to another, which in himself it is impossible to acquire. Heaven becomes his, not merely in love, but in law; and in consideration of him who hath fulfilled the law, the bliss of eternity is as much awarded to him by a God of judgment, as it is made over to him by a God of mercy. Yet the law does not obliterate the love, but only makes it more prominent. For it was in love that God sent his Son into the world, and in love for the guilty did the Son, in their stead, obey all the precepts, and suffer all the penalties; and though without a righteousness none shall enter into paradise, yet was it love that provided the righteousness, and now presses it on the acceptance of us all. None shall be admitted into heaven but from the vantage ground of a finished obedience; but it was God himself who reared the vantage ground, and who placed the believer thereupon. The whole security of a righteousness is his, the whole glory of it is another's. That he shall have a righteousness is indispensable. For this there seems to have been some deep and awful necessity in the divine jurisprudence; and it has been so provided for, that now the sinner can rightfully claim, and God, without the compromise of his character as a judge, can rightfully bestow. But the very thing which has established the sinner's plea, has deepened the sinner's

obligations; and, in very proportion to the triumph which he feels because of the validity of his right, are both the gratitude and the self-renunciation wherewith, in the language of the Prophet, he makes the declaration—"In the Lord have I righteousness."

We shall close our remarks by adverting to a phrase that we often hear uttered, in the act of combating the resistance of man to the overtures of the Gospel; and that is, *the legal spirit*. Now, if by this be meant the demand that nature has for a righteousness wherein to appear before God—this is just as it should be. There is, and there ought to be, a secret misgiving of the heart, when nothing but the general mercy of God is before us, on which to build our reliance. The thought of God's other attributes will intrude and mar the soul's attempt to tranquillize itself. The sense of a holy and unalterable law, whose demands must be met in one way or other, is ever present to the conscience; and, without some adjustment in which it can repose, will leave it unsatisfied. There is a longing for the bliss of eternity, but at the same time a certain unutterable sense upon the heart, that without a something whereby the justice of God might be propitiated, and a homage might be done to the principles of a government that is lofty and unchangeable, this bliss can never be arrived at. We feel, that ere we can enter upon life everlasting, every legal penalty must be done away, and a sufficient legal plea be established on which to found our right of admittance before the throne of God. The notions and the feelings of jurisprudence are mixed up with our every speculation on the road to heaven; and

it is the inextinguishable sentiment of every bosom, that, in order to man being inducted there, a something must be done upon which God might hold him to be righteous, and deal with him accordingly. A sense of the need of such a righteousness is universal, and is historically marked both by the sacrifices of heathenism, and by the manifold labours and formalities of superstitions both in and out of Christendom. There is the unexcepted sense of a great moral jurisdiction on the part of God over his creatures, and of a law which they are bound to observe—and of the need that there is, if men shall obtain the rewards and preferments of eternity at all, that the law shall give the authority of its consent, so that they may be legally and rightfully conveyed to him. Hence, under all the disguises of all the superstitions upon earth, the universal cry of man for a righteousness in order to find acceptance with his God—a cry which the Bible does not resist, but to which it fully and explicitly responds, when it affirms of the sanctions of the law, that they are irreversible, and that heaven and earth must pass away rather than that one jot or one tittle of the law shall fail.

Now, it may serve to guide us out of all our perplexities, and to establish us on the right landing-place, did we see what is right, and accurately distinguish it from what is wrong in this legal spirit. In so far then, as the legal spirit prompts him by whom it is actuated, to seek for a legal right of admittance into heaven, we have nothing to say against it. It seems the general apprehension of nature, in all countries and in all ages, that there is no reaching a habitation of bliss and of divine favour

through eternity, but by the stepping-stone of a righteousness—and this apprehension we hold to be a sound one. The error lies not in seeking such a righteousness, but in seeking it from the wrong quarter. The capital delusion is in attempting to build up a righteousness out of our own doings, instead of fleeing for shelter under the offered righteousness that has already been built up out of the doings of another. This is all that we hold to be wrong in the legal spirit; for, in as far as the mere attempt to make up a title-deed is concerned—in as far as the wish is felt to have a right of entry to the inheritance that is above put into our hands, which may be examined at the court of heaven's judicatory, and be there sustained as in every way valid and constitutional,—this, for which nature every where has so strong an appetite, so far from being denounced as wrong in Scripture, it is the great design of the Gospel to meet and to satisfy. The object in the general is not wrong—though it is very possible that we may go miserably astray, by looking for it in a wrong direction. It is by looking for it in ourselves that we err so grievously, when we should look unto Jesus Christ, and say, in the words of the Prophet, “In the Lord have I righteousness.” The errand upon which he came, was to bring a righteousness into the world, that each sinner who would, might lay hold of as his sacred and available plea for admittance into heaven. This is the righteousness that God hath ordained as the channel of approach, by which even the worst of transgressors may draw nigh; of which they are all invited to make confident mention in their prayers for acceptance; and on account of which

God stands pledged to accept and to reward them accordingly. In the New Testament it is called the righteousness of God. It is not because of our desire for a righteousness that we are on the wrong path to heaven ; but because, instead of submitting to this righteousness of God, we seek to establish one of our own. In a word, it is self-righteousness that is the great stumbling-block in our way. It is the vain enterprise of working an adequate and a satisfying merit out of our own obedience. It is challenging the inspection of our almighty Lawgiver, on a heart that has deeply revolted against him, and on a history deformed by transgressions innumerable—and bidding him look thereupon with complacency. It is labouring to arrive at rest by means of a degraded law, brought down to the standard of our own weak and worthless compliances—and without homage to the purity and the unchangeableness of heaven's government,—it is arrogating the rewards of heaven for our own polluted righteousness, as being in itself good enough for God. Now this is the tendency of nature against which the Gospel hath set itself—not to thwart our demand for a righteousness, but to lay in the dust all confidence in a righteousness of our own,—and after having asserted the prerogatives of an outraged law, by laying the whole burden of its atonement and obedience on Him who hath suffered in our stead, and in our stead hath fulfilled all righteousness ; to make open proclamation to our world, that all are welcome unto God—that now there is a way of access unto him, even for the most grievous of offenders,—but that this way is, and must be, under the cover of the

great Mediatorship. You will breathe a new air, you will break forth on a scene of freedom and enlargement; all will be light, and love, and liberty, the moment that you can say, with the concurrence of your faith, "In the Lord have I righteousness:" and, feeling that nothing else will avail for Heaven's approbation, you can join the Apostle in his sentiment, that, for the meritorious favour of God, I desire to count as nothing my own services: I desire and am determined "to know nothing else save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

We know of no Treatise better fitted to banish the legal spirit, or to dispossess the mind of its natural tendencies to establish a righteousness of our own, than the excellent LETTERS of Mr. ROMAINE which we have given in the present selection. The Letters were all addressed to friends, for whose spiritual welfare the Author cherished a deep interest; and they were therefore designed to communicate comfort, or counsel, or direction, for resolving the doubts, or relieving the perplexities to which the Christian is exposed. To dissipate these doubts and perplexities, which he well knew originated most frequently in a self-righteous spirit, he continually directs their believing view to Jesus Christ. And well knowing that the manifestations of the love and grace of our heavenly Father, revealed to the soul by the blessed Saviour, could alone dispel the fears and the jealousies of nature, his constant aim was to point their eye, and direct their steps, to "the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world." And thus, by the simple reliance of faith on the all-sufficient atonement and perfect righteousness of Christ, he directed them to find that peace and hope which

could alone sustain their souls in the serenity of their confidence towards God, and to obtain those spiritual communications of grace, which could alone nourish the divine life within them, and carry them forward in a progressive course of sanctification and holiness, to render them meet for heaven. Richly experiencing these consolations and hopes in his own soul, and knowing the alone source from whence they were derived, the doctrine of the cross became the subject of his constant meditation, and the name of Jesus the much-loved theme on which he delighted to expatiate. Amidst all his difficulties and perplexities, his confidence was stayed with the assurance that “the Lord reigneth;” and, by judging Him faithful who had promised, he maintained in his soul a rejoicing hope of eternal life, through his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It was thus that he maintained a perennial and unfading communion with God—that he daily and habitually rejoiced in the light of his reconciled countenance—that his gratitude and love were sustained in a strong and invariable glow—and that his sanctification and holiness were promoted. And no one can peruse the following Letters, without perceiving that the doctrines of free grace are doctrines according to godliness—that they served no less to aliment the love and the obedience, than the peace and the joy of the believer—and that justification by faith in the Saviour’s righteousness alone, forms not only the surest ground of hope, but the best security for an humble and holy devotedness of life to God.

T. C.

EDINBURGH, *July*, 1830.

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PREFACE

TO

LETTERS TO A FRIEND.

THE following **LETTERS**, it is presumed, need no confirmation of their authenticity, nor any recommendation of their invaluable contents, to those who knew and esteemed their late excellent Author. The manner and style, almost peculiar to himself, of making Christ the All in All, in the glory of his person, the efficacy of his blood and righteousness, and the fulness of his salvation, proclaim aloud these were written by no other than Mr. Romaine: they prove also, to a demonstration, that Jesus was his darling theme, in his closet as well as in the pulpit, in his private correspondence as in his public discourses; nor, indeed, was this holy man of God ever in his element but when he was making mention of his divine Master's name and righteousness only, of which it might be literally said he knew no end.

The Editor flatters himself he is bringing glory to his adorable Lord, as well as rendering an essential service to the church, by preserving this invaluable treasure from oblivion, which God in his providence hath thus put into his hands, he trusts, for this very purpose, and is not to be found in any other publication.

Nor will his prayers be wanting,—that every reader of this precious collection may, by the divine blessing, reap the greatest benefit from its perusal, and have cause to glorify the great Head of the church, who had so abundantly blessed this incomparable minister's labours in his life, for accompanying with the unction of the Spirit these his posthumous Letters, by which, though dead, he yet speaketh.

Finally, he humbly hopes that, as the deceased blessed Author of these epistles had treated the religious world frequently with various other Treatises and Sermons, the novelty of this little work, sanctioned too by its own intrinsic excellence, will still render it doubly acceptable to the church of God; especially as every thing is omitted of a personal nature respecting the friend to whom these Letters were immediately addressed; and what is here published is presumed to be of equal concern to every other individual believer.

For their service, therefore, and with this view, is this mite humbly cast into the Lord's treasury, by a willing, though unworthy servant of Christ,

THE EDITOR.

LETTERS.

LETTERS TO A FRIEND.

LETTER I.

Dec. 28th, 1762.

MY dear Friend,—I do not forget you nor your last favour. Till memory fail me, I hope in a grateful mind to retain a sweet sense of your kindness to me. Blessed be his name ! I have a desire put into my heart by my heavenly lover, to spread his fame and glory as far as my tongue can reach : and for what else do I take up my pen but to make mention of him, even of him only ? the favourite theme of his redeemed on earth ; the triumph of the same redeemed, when they come to Sion with everlasting joy upon their heads, and in their hearts. My meditation of him is now sweet : in one single point of view I am beholding him, and in that he is all-glorious. O that the faithful witness for him may give you to feel what I have felt of his incarnate love ! May the Spirit glorify, in your soul, that greatest, that standing miracle of Jehovah's everlasting grace, by letting you know, that for you a child was born,

for you a son was given, even Emmanuel himself—God with us, and God for us. I will try to lead you, by the light of revelation, into some of the wonders of this transaction, as they have been manifested with life and power unto my own heart.

The Scripture is a full description of the purposes of the divine will from eternity to eternity. Therein we find a council held, before all worlds, between the holy Trinity, and the decrees of this council confirmed by the covenant and oath of each of the divine persons. This was the great contrivance of heaven, and it lay in the bosom of Jehovah with infinite delight. He viewed it as the richest display of all his divine perfections, in which, and for which, his glory would be admired and enjoyed by his creatures for ever and for ever. Emmanuel was the centre of this covenant—his becoming surety for his people—taking flesh for them—living and dying, that the divine honours of the holiness, and truth, and justice of the Godhead might shine forth in full-orbed glory, for showing mercy to poor sinners;—this was, this is, this will be the eternal subject of praise. Hear how the Father triumphs in the Son of his love: “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth.” And again, with a voice from heaven, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” All the counsels, decrees, and works of Jehovah terminate, yea, begin and end, in this blessed Emmanuel; and therefore, when the angels were created, the purpose of Jehovah’s taking flesh was manifested to them; and proclamation was made—“Let all the angels of God *worship him.*” Pride arose in the heart of Lucifer

and his companions : their will opposed the will of the Eternal Three in this matter, for which they were cast out of heaven, and have opposed Christ and his people ever since.

Then this world was created for the carrying into execution the purposes of the everlasting covenant. Man, the object of the Deity's delight, as made in the image of God—part of two worlds—a body of earth, an immortal spirit—by the one connected to matter and sense, by the other to God, the Father of spirits. The enemy of Jesus attacked Eve, and beguiled her through his subtlety. Adam was not deceived, but fell by listening to his material and sensual part. He preferred his wife to God, and so lost his image, knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.

Upon this the revelation of the covenant was made, and the incarnation of Jehovah was made known, as the ground of faith and hope, and of return again to God in the way of love and gratitude. As clear as words can speak and signs declare, the promised seed of the woman was to attack Satan, and was to bruise his head, where his poison lies, and thereby to deliver his people. For this purpose the Father sent him into the world, that he might deliver us from the power of darkness, and translate us into the kingdom of his dear Son. I believe, from the evidence of Scripture, that Adam, and all believers downwards, had as clear a view of the incarnation of Jehovah, and of the reasons for his taking flesh, as you and I have ; and with as warm hearts as we can, have they rejoiced in the God of their salvation. Hear one of them, how he stands amazed at this miracle of mercy : “ But will God indeed

dwell with men on the earth?" And mind the pious breathings of his holy father—how he longed for Christ! "O that the salvation was come unto Israel out of Zion! O that the Lord would deliver his people out of captivity! Then shall Jacob rejoice, and Israel shall be glad." That he would come, was the ground of hope to all believers in every age; and there were many of them waiting when he came, who blessed God for letting them see with their eyes his great salvation. At the fixed moment, when the fulness of time was come, there was a chosen vessel most graciously fitted and humbled for this miraculous conception. She was highly favoured, high in grace, meek and lowly in heart; and of her, by the power of the Holy Ghost, was that holy child conceived—of her, the virgin mother, was he born—a babe, helpless as we are. Here is love! O what a miracle—God incarnate! And yet like us in all things—an infant. Be astonished, ye heavens! and adore, thou earth! this miracle of miracles!

He is born among us; grows up as we do; a child, a youth, a man—true and very man. But O the rapturous thought! he is Jehovah. Think, O think what that blessed woman felt, when she broke out into this sweet hymn:—"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." There is my honour,—not that he is my son, but that he is God my Saviour. He took my nature, that I might take his: he lived for me, that by his obedience I might be made righteous: he suffered my punishment, that I might never suffer it: he bore my curse, to redeem me from the curse of *the law*: he was forsaken of God his Father, that I

might never be forsaken : he died to give me life : he rose again, to take possession of life for me : he ascended in our nature, and is glorified in it : what he has, I shall have : his honours, his crown and dignity, his fulness of joy and bliss—all, all are mine : what he is, what he was, is for me ; for he is God my Saviour. Happy, thrice happy Mary, virgin mother ! Yea, happy, thrice happy too, Mrs. ——. Is not the new-born King your King ? Is not the child Jesus your God ? He is, he is ! you cannot deny it. O come then, my dear friend, let us praise his precious name, and let us magnify his love together. Soon, yet a very little while, and we shall be with him—we shall be like him. O what a thought is that—like him ! Yes, when we come where he is, the glory of that Sun of righteousness will shine upon us, yea, will shine into us, and he will make us what he is. We shall then be happy partakers of all that was with delight in the breast of Jehovah from eternity ; all will be fulfilled. The Father's richest love, the most exalted grace of the Spirit, will flow, through the infinitely blessed Emmanuel, into all his glorified members. This is the accomplishment of the everlasting covenant. In this the Eternal Three will take eternal delight. Jehovah will rest in his love. And through that God-man will the Godhead have full, perfect, and everlasting glory, honour, worship, blessing, and praise, from the full choir. You will sing aloud, in as high a key as any one of them all. Complain you may, and of yourself you ought ; but then it will be all praise—all wonder—that you should be chosen, elect of God, partaker of his covenant-love : this distinguish-

ing grace will make you a happy, willing debtor to Emmanuel, for ever and ever.

Thus, looking backward or forward, I see all the purposes and works of God bearing respect to this wonderful person. He was set up from everlasting as the Alpha, and he will be to everlasting the Omega; for in all things he must have the pre-eminence. He has it above: O that we may ascribe more of it to him below! And you will, if you can pierce with the eagle-eye of faith within the vail. There you will behold Emmanuel enthroned, and all the host of heaven worshipping at his feet, admiring and adoring, because sharing in, his divine excellencies. The beauty of this sight makes an eternal heaven. Then, if your faith has any ears to hear, listen. O what melody do they make!—what notes do these golden harps strike!—what voices accompany them!—what a harmony! The words I understand—they are singing “salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever.” But their manner of singing is peculiar to the place. The air can form no such sounds: they can be only in the element of heaven. When your faith comes down from this high flight, and it is not capable of being long there, then look around you; and whatever object your eyes first fix upon, if they be spiritually exercised, you will see some ray of our Emmanuel’s glory. The book of nature is the outward record of his fame. Some of his great achievements are engraved in every part of the creation. The sun, moon, and stars, the earth, with all its productions, in full concert join the choir above, and in perfect unison sound forth the glory of our Emmanuel. And suppose I direct your

eye to an object which I know you do not like to look at—YOURSELF, even there I can find (O that you may!) as great a proof of the Redeemer's glory as any where else upon earth. For what are you? Are you not a poor, miserable, helpless sinner? His crown depends upon his saving such. What do you feel within you?—tell all your complaints. These just fit you to live upon the Saviour's fulness. Look at your outward estate: tell me that part of it which does not display the Saviour's glory. What does fortune say, and health, and friends? (I put myself in.) Let me be their mouth: "We are all the gifts of Jesus' rich love—love him for bestowing us upon you; and the more you have, love him more." And mind you cannot, you never will, love him too much. Try—put forth all your strength; he will still be above your affection, the best, the utmost of it. I wish you much of his company this Christmas—many a sweet visit from him. When you are very familiar, put a word in for me. O how I long to be more intimate with him! But he is kind indeed, exceedingly kind. Dearest, dearest Jesus!—May he never leave you without some token of his love! Farewell. W. R.

LETTER II.

Lambeth, Jan. 18, 1763.

My dear Friend,—I often remember you in the best place, and for the best purposes, but cannot bring myself to love writing of letters. Yet I have again taken up my pen, to wish you every spiritual

blessing purchased by the life and death of our incarnate God ; and that will make you as happy as you can be on this side of heaven. In this new year, may you grow in the knowledge of the excellency of his most adorable person, of his complete finished salvation, and of your own particular interest in it ! and, having these believing views, may you glorify him by living happily upon his fulness ! I know a little of these matters, and but little ; yet I am sitting, abashed at my ignorance, at my Master's feet. He has made me willing to hear his words ; and I find his lips so full of grace, that I cannot spare a moment for my Homer or Virgil, my favourite Tully or Demosthenes. Adieu for ever to all the classics. I see a heavenly life, as well as a matchless beauty, in my Lord's words ; and though I am a dull scholar, yet he is a blessed Master. He keeps me waiting upon him day by day, trusting nothing to my own understanding, but listening continually to his instruction ; so he gets all the glory of making me wise unto salvation. To this great Prophet may you repair for instruction all this year ! He teaches as never man taught. His doctrine is with power and demonstration of the Spirit. He can so humble your pride, that you shall be as dependent upon him as a new-born babe ; and then, having emptied you of your own carnal reason and false wisdom, he will enlighten you, by his word and Spirit, with saving truth. Here the humblest scholar learns the most ; indeed he has learned the most : for our highest lesson is to learn how to live upon him, who was made of God unto us wisdom ; and he who relies most upon him for that wisdom, will certainly be the wisest.

If the whole world was mine, and I could purchase what I would with it, I would give it all to be a scholar made poor in spirit at Christ's feet. And what then can I wish my dear friend better than to be one of his little children, whom he teaches his mind and will? Only I could wish you more humbled, that you may more perfectly learn the two blessed truths which he is exalted to teach his people; namely, to believe in his blood and righteousness, and to live upon his grace and power.

His prophetic office is to teach us how to be always *safe* by believing in him, and always *happy* by living upon him. He has the residue of the Spirit with him, and he sends him into the believer's heart, to be always preaching this most comfortable doctrine, that whatever he wants for his acceptance at the bar of justice, it is perfectly to be had, and freely in the fulness of the Lord Christ. Sins as red as scarlet, sins as numerous as the stars, or as the sands upon the sea-shore innumerable, and nature as black as hell, a heart as wicked as the devil, the divine and eternally precious blood of Jesus can so cleanse and purify, that not one spot shall remain; for he is Almighty. He has all power in heaven and earth to pardon sin. If I had been guilty of all the sins of Adam and Eve, and of all their descendants to this day, yet believing in him I should be safe, because his blood cleanseth from all sin. And in Christ the believer has a better righteousness than that of the angels; theirs is finite, his is infinite: a better righteousness than that of our first parents in paradise; theirs was the righteousness of a creature, and they lost it; this is the righteousness of God,

and it is an everlasting righteousness, never to be lost. It is the righteousness in which the saints stand before God for ever and ever. When the Holy Spirit takes of these things of Christ, and preaches them to the heart, O what a sweet peace follows ! For the believer then finds himself saved from all the miseries of sin, and entitled to all the blessings of eternal glory ; and, being thus persuaded of his safety, by believing in the atoning blood of our great High Priest, then the Holy Spirit teaches him how to live upon Christ, and how to make use of Christ's fulness. On our learning this lesson depends our comfortable walk heavenwards ; for Christ does not give us a stock of grace, and expect us to improve it by being faithful to grace given. No, no ; that is not his way. Our souls must depend upon him, as our bodies do upon the elements of this world. Every moment we must live by faith upon his fulness, and be every moment receiving out of it grace for grace. And this is our happiness—to have all in Christ. A beggar in myself, but rich with unsearchable eternal riches in him. Ignorant still in myself, but led and taught by his unerring wisdom. A sinner still, but believing in his blood and righteousness. Weak and helpless still, but kept by his almighty love. Nothing but sorrow in myself, nothing but joy in him. O this is a blessed life ! No tongue can tell what a heaven it is thus to live by faith upon the Son of God. Thanks be to him, I know a little of it ; and I cannot but heartily pray that you may know more of it this year than you ever did. Surely I could not have thought, some years ago, that there was such a heaven upon earth

as I now find.—Blessings for ever on the Lamb !
 May you find it more and more ! Sweet Jesus keep
 you, my dear friend ! W. R.

LETTER III.

Lambeth, March 26, 1763.

THANKS to my dear friend for her kind letter this morning. The subject inquired after is what I have been long exercised about, both in my own soul and in my ministry. And for the sake of weak believers, and to save myself great trouble in continually conversing with these persons, I resolved to write a little treatise upon the subject. I trust my time and strength, what I have and am, is now the Lord's. I wish he may use me as he pleases, for his own glory. My writings are to set forth his praise, and to exalt his salvation. The inclosed plan will show you what I propose: and, to make it more easy to be understood, I shall relate it by way of experience, giving an account of *the Life of Faith*, as it was begun in one of my acquaintance, and carried on to this day, he being now a father in Christ; and I shall make remarks upon it as I go on. The subject is but little known. I pray you, my dear friend, forget not me nor my book. Beg of the Lord Christ to bless it. If he smile upon it, it will be useful to his people. That is my highest wish. May it be profitable and useful to your soul !

To a precious Jesus I commend you. To his love and to his power leave all your matters. What cannot, what will not he do for you, if you do but

trust him? Are they not all happy in heaven? It is his happiness. They have it from him. Trust him, and he will not only bring you safe there, but also make you happy by the way. O what a savour is there in his name! I did but just mention him, and I can scarce stop my pen, his love so warms my heart. Dear, precious Jesus! thou art above all blessing and praise: fill my friend's heart with thy love, and make her rejoice in thy finished salvation. My kind respects to Miss —: and pray tell her she cannot possibly think too highly of Christ, nor love him too much, nor live too much by faith upon him. His salvation is infinite and eternal: the love of him for his salvation is heaven upon earth; and living by faith upon him for the present graces and the future glories of this salvation, is getting every moment fresh tokens of his love to us, and exciting fresh love to him. In short, I wish she may be married to Christ; and then, his person being hers, his honours, his estate, and all he has, will be hers also. Once more, to that dearest of all names, Jesus, I commend you; and am yours unfeignedly for his sake,

W. R.

LETTER IV.

Lambeth, May 14, 1763.

BLESSED be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed you with so many blessings already, and who, having begun, will not cease to bless you in life and death, and for evermore! Your letter of May 2d puts me in mind of his good-

as I now find.—Blessings for ever on the Lamb !
 May you find it more and more ! Sweet Jesus keep
 you, my dear friend ! W. R.

LETTER III.

Lambeth, March 26, 1763.

THANKS to my dear friend for her kind letter this morning. The subject inquired after is what I have been long exercised about, both in my own soul and in my ministry. And for the sake of weak believers, and to save myself great trouble in continually conversing with these persons, I resolved to write a little treatise upon the subject. I trust my time and strength, what I have and am, is now the Lord's. I wish he may use me as he pleases, for his own glory. My writings are to set forth his praise, and to exalt his salvation. The inclosed plan will show you what I propose: and, to make it more easy to be understood, I shall relate it by way of experience, giving an account of *the Life of Faith*, as it was begun in one of my acquaintance, and carried on to this day, he being now a father in Christ; and I shall make remarks upon it as I go on. The subject is but little known. I pray you, my dear friend, forget not me nor my book. Beg of the Lord Christ to bless it. If he smile upon it, it will be useful to his people. That is my highest wish. May it be profitable and useful to your soul !

To a precious Jesus I commend you. To his love and to his power leave all your matters. What cannot, what will not he do for you, if you do but

should send such a one to preach his gospel, and bless it too to many, many souls, (while every sermon covers me with shame and confusion.) O this is wonderful, wonderful, eternally to be admired grace! What cannot he do, who can form a preacher out of such a dry rotten stick, fit for nothing but the fire of hell? Glory, glory be to him alone, and for ever, and for evermore. All the tongues in heaven and in earth, men and angels, throughout eternity, cannot praise him enough for what he has already done for my soul; and therefore I am, and I am content to be, a poor broken bankrupt debtor for ever. Hereby I shall be enabled for ever to exalt him, and to put the crown upon his head, and that is all I want. It will be heaven enough to join that blessed company, who are crying, "Worthy is the Lamb (but none else) to receive blessing and glory," &c. Nothing is mentioned among them but Jesus' goodness, and he does not leave himself without witness among us poor sinners. I am yours in Jesus, W. R.

LETTER V.

My dear Madam,—I cannot resist the opportunity, though I can write but two or three lines, to thank you for your last letter, and for your kindness to me expressed in it. I thank God for the contents. What you say of yourself is to me very comfortable, because I see how the Spirit of God is leading you. He is taking you up into the highest form in the school of Christ, and is teaching you an experience which is not only next to glory, but is also glory

begun. This being the hardest to learn, no wonder you should complain. I take notice of your account of your present state, of your trials, and of the exercises of your faith. A great part of your letter is upon these points, describing your self-abasement and loathing at the sight and sense of what you are in yourself, and wondering that such a one as you should be brought to know, to believe in, and to love our Jesus.

Now, my good friend, I must tell you, if you had written to me, and desired me to give you the character of a true Christian, I should have copied it from your letter. I could not have left one circumstance out. All that you mention of your being tried, afflicted in body and mind, brought low, and kept low; sometimes mourning at the strength of corruption, and at the weakness of your graces; at your love to earthly relations, and at your love to our Jesus—one so strong, the other so weak; your trials on these, and many other such like accounts, are such as no true disciple of Christ, in your circumstances, could be without. My answer should have been, “He is exactly what Mrs. ——— says she is.” For in reading the Scripture I can find but these two things spoken of the office of the Holy Spirit: He first enables the sinner to receive Christ by faith; and then to live upon him, so received, for all things. If you examine these two rules carefully, you will see that all the teachings of the Holy Spirit may be reduced to them; and if you examine yourself by the light of the word, you will have no doubt but that you are among them to whom the promise was made: “All thy children shall be taught

of God." For, have you not renounced your righteousness as well as your sins? Have you no more dependence on your good works than on your bad works? Is not the holy nature of our Emmanuel, his infinitely holy life, his everlastingly precious death—is not this complete work of his the only ground of your hope? "O yes," say you, "on this rock I lay my foundation, I build all on it for time and for eternity." Very well! then certain it is, the Holy Spirit has done his first work in you. He has enabled you to receive Christ; now he is carrying on his work, the second part of the same lesson, which is enabling you to live upon Christ received. This is very hard to learn; it is against nature; against our natural love for law and works, our legal lookings at self, our foolish hope, If I live longer I shall be better. O it is hard, I find it to this hour, like leaping overboard in a storm, to cast myself simply on Jesus for every thing; but it must be done. The Spirit abides with you for this purpose—"that he may take of the things of Christ, and show them to you, and so glorify him." When he is teaching this heavenly truth, we kick against it, we pervert it. When we go on the best, we think we are at the worst. But he abides, to conquer our opposition, to set right what we pervert, and to convince us all is and shall be well. May he thus bless a word spoken to the Saviour's glory!

My dear friend, you know it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell in our Jesus: it pleases the Spirit to witness of it, and to glorify it. How? in what way?—why, just as he is teaching you. He is bringing you to live out of yourself upon the

fulness of Jesus. Mind how he does it. He shows you, first, that you want such a thing; then, that you cannot get it any where but from Jesus; and then he leads you to think, that, trusting to his faithful word, you may experience how ready his heart, how able his hand, is to supply all your need. This is a beggar's life; here is nothing but alms. We do not like it. We want some stock; if we could get it, we should like an independent fortune. But it cannot be. The Spirit of Jesus will witness of nothing, and glorify nothing but the Saviour's all-sufficient grace; and therefore he sets himself against all our greatness and goodness—that he who glorieth may glory only in the Lord Christ. And when he is bringing us to this true glorifying of the Lord, we mistake, we pervert his lessons; I know I do, and I think you do. We both fail in our experience, as your letter clearly proves to me.

If you ask me how you may become a better scholar? as I have been taught, I would gladly inform you.

Read and pray for more self-knowledge: God's word and Spirit will teach you nothing about yourself but what will humble you to the dust, and keep you there. Read and pray for more knowledge of Jesus, of his person God-man—his salvation-work infinitely and everlastingly perfect: he is yours, now he is received; and all he has, and all he is, as Jesus, yours in title; and, so far as you believe, yours now in possession.

Read and pray for more faith, that what you have a title to, you may take possession of, and so make constant use of it. Your estate is great, immensely great. Use it and live up to it: as you do in tem-

porals, so do in spirituals. Your money, your land, your air, your light, your meat and drink, and house and clothing, these you use: but you have not them *in* you; only, being yours, they are used *by* you. So do by Christ. When the Spirit would glorify Jesus, he humbles you; when he would glorify his fulness, he makes you feel your emptiness; when he would bring you to rely on his strength, he convinces you of your weakness; when he would magnify the comforts of Jesus, he makes you sensible of your misery; when he would fix your heart on his heaven, he makes you feel you deserved hell; when he would exalt his righteousness, you find you are a poor miserable sinner. Can you, my friend, practise this? let nothing keep you from Jesus. Whatever you need, whatever you feel wrong, may it bring you to the Saviour's fulness! O that all things may help forward your acquaintance with him! I except nothing, neither sin nor sorrow; I would carry all to him, as one great lump of sin, and receive all good from him, as the only storehouse of good for wretched sinners. In this communion I desire to grow; for this I desire to live. O that you and I may learn it more, and get every day nearer fellowship with our sweet Jesus—growing up into him in all things.

See how my pen runs on as fast as I can write. My very heart and soul are enamoured with him! I love his name; I adore his person: he is my heaven. O what treasures are there in our Jesus! May his glorious Spirit witness for him to your heart. Believe me your very sincere friend, a well-wisher in that matchless lover of sinners, and of one of the *chief of them*.

W. R.

LETTER VI.

Brighthelmstone, Sept. 1, 1763.

I HAVE at last got a spare hour to write to my dear friends at ———, and to tell them how much I wish all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus may be theirs.

Since I left you, all has been hurry, travelling from place to place, till kind Providence has brought me to Brighthelmstone, where I hope for a little rest—not so much to my soul; blessed be the grace of sweet Jesus, I have that—but rest from distraction, hurry, dust, heat, and want of sleep. This is a kind of haven after a storm. Not that I expect a continual calm here: it would be a sad place indeed if there were no enemies, no warfare, no trials and troubles in it. These I must have wherever I go; because they grow in my constitution, and are nourished in the body of sin—and because without them I should not know how to prize Christ. But I find my retired and private times are the best for my own soul, as more public times are for others: and yet that sweetest blessed Jesus, when I am in his work, takes care of me; and when I am watering others, he does not leave me unwatered myself. I am a witness for him. I have been preaching of his salvation many years in the midst of a crowd, living all the time in a great hurry; and yet I gain every year some fresh knowledge of myself, some more knowledge of my incarnate God, and some steadier trust and dependence upon him; and I can say it is good

for me that I have been a poor despised preacher of Christ Jesus.

Now, what can I wish, my dear friend, more for her peace and blessedness, than that the dear Saviour may do for her what he has done for me, only in a greater degree? for I am sure it is a growing thing. In the knowledge of ourselves we may certainly increase. There is a mystery of iniquity in us, which we shall not perfectly comprehend so long as we live. But as we make fresh discoveries of it, we shall see our want more of Christ, and thereby get more knowledge of the great mystery of godliness. The sense of our manifold wants will magnify the riches of his grace in supplying them. So, the lower man is abased, the higher is the Saviour exalted. And this will of course bring us to make more use of him, to trust him more, and to live more upon him, which is the blessedness of faith. When I feel the depth of my distress and wants, and the infinite riches of Jesus' grace to supply them, then faith does its office aright, when it is not discouraged by a sense of many increasing wants, but is thereby made to cleave closer to Jesus, and to prize him more. This is my present state; and in it I have at times a pleasure which cannot be described. The height of Jesus' grace is so exactly suited to the depth of my distress, that I am ready to glory in it. I would not be without one single want. My wants are my happiness. They make Christ so exceedingly desirable, that fresh wants add to him in my eyes fresh beauty. It is a pleasure to be in his debt—yea, the greatest I know of. I would not have inherent righteousness, if I could get it for nothing. I would not be

rich, and increase in goods, and have need of nothing from him, if it was possible. His glory is my heart's delight; and therefore I love to glorify him, by living upon his fulness. I nothing—He all in all. When it is thus with me, I am safe and happy. I am the greatest fool that ever lived—I feel it; and that makes his wisdom so precious. I am the chief of sinners—I find it daily; and that makes his blood and righteousness my continual delight. I have as many evil tempers as the devil: O how they stir and fight against the Spirit! But Jesus is my sanctification. He has given them their death's wound; and by and by they will expire, and be no more. In myself I deserve hell every moment; but Jesus is my redemption, my eternal redemption. O how my heart loves him! He knows it well. And if I am ever vouchsafed (why should I doubt it?) to see him face to face, I will acknowledge him to be all in all, and rejoice to acknowledge it for ever. And it will be the very heaven of heavens (truly I taste something of heaven in thinking of it,) to give him the glory of my crown, and to lay it low at his feet. “Worthy is the Lamb.” Thanks be to him, I can sing this song now but in a poor strain to what I hope to do soon. Sweet Jesus bring you and me safe to the eternal enjoyment of him and his glory.

W. R.

LETTER VII.

Brighthelmstone, Sept. 26, 1763.

THE presence of dear Jesus be with my dear friend—that presence which turns darkness into light,

sin into righteousness, misery into heaven. What can you want if he be with you? He has such a miraculous virtue, that he can turn your weakness into strength, your mourning into joy, your death into life; so that there is not in you any evil effect of sin, but his almighty grace can make it work under him for his glory, and for your good. O may this presence be with you as long as you are in this state of weakness, and mourning, and death! Sweet Jesus keep you; nay, I know he will. His tender, loving heart loves to the end. O, my friend, what a Saviour is he! O how I love him! He knows I do; and yet I am ashamed to think how far below his deserts. By and by I shall do better, when you and I meet before his throne; then, then—But—I stop.

Would——be worthy my acceptance? The worth of it does not come before me, but what my Master expects of me. His will must be my rule; and it has been a long time as plain to me as that two and two make four. I am stationed by myself. I am alone in London: and while he keeps me there, I dare not move; as, when he has a mind to remove me, my way will be as plain from London as it is now to abide in it. If I hearkened to self, and wanted to run away from the cross, I know of no place so snug as ——; but would you have me such a coward as to fly, and such a one to stand by me—one who has kept me in many battles, and one who, I trust, will presently make me more than conqueror.

I have not time to answer your letter in other points. Only be assured of my prayers (such as they are) for your reading the Bible. Remember

again, Christ is the sum and substance of it all. May his Spirit breathe upon it as you read, and lead you beyond the letter to the life-giving sense.

I have great faith about ——. You *will* be taken care of. Do not doubt it. The government is on Christ's shoulders, and he does all things well. Leave it to him. But he does use means; therefore pray write as soon as you have fixed on a proper person. My kind love to dear Mr. ——. I wish him as happy as my Master can make him, and then he will be one of the happiest men in this world. Our friends with you have my hearty good wishes for their better acquaintance with the precious Lord Jesus, and more faith to get more out of his fulness. To him I commend you all, and your present case at ——; and am, with my wife's respects, for his sake, your faithful friend and servant, W. R.

LETTER VIII.

Lambeth, April 17, 1764.

My dear Friend,—I have just now received your letter, and thank you for the kindness you express in it to me. I am pretty well in health, and loaded with benefits,—nothing but mercy, rich mercy, every day. All the dealings of my most precious Jesus with my soul are grace and love. He not only promises, and, by faith, makes me rely upon him for heaven, but now, even now, I am as it were in heaven; for I live upon his heavenly blessings. Vile and base as I am, yet he lets me approach him, and converse with him freely! He vouchsafes to admit me

into fellowship with him : and he opens his treasures, and says, ' All these are thine ; I bought them for thee with the price of my blood, but I give them to thee as a free gift. Take this for the earnest—accept this for the pledge of all the rest ; and all mine are thine.' Yes, Lord, I believe it ; on thy word do I trust, and I rely upon thy faithfulness to make it good to me. I desire to glorify thee amidst all my wants, and sins, and miseries, by living out of myself upon thine infinite fulness. Empty me still more, blessed Lord ! by daily emptying me more, that I may be capable of holding more of thy good things. What do you think of this ? is it not heaven begun ? What is heaven but the perfection of this life of grace ? Believers now live with Christ ; they now live upon Christ. Christ is their all ; for the life which they now live in the flesh, they live by the faith of the Son of God : and what a blessed life this is I have in some small degree experienced ; and what the Lord has taught me I have endeavoured to set forth, and make public, for his glory, and the comfort of weak believers. The little book is finished. May my ever dear Jesus shine upon every page as you read it, and strengthen your faith, and warm your heart with his heavenly love. I beg your prayers for a blessing on this book ; I beseech you do not forget it, for your own sakes and mine, and all the household of faith. To Jesus' love I commend you and Mr. — ; and am, by many ties, your servant in the gospel,

W. R.

LETTER IX.

July 3, 1764.

I HAVE my dear friend's letter of the 19th of June by me, and thank you for it. You may be sure I am glad to hear the little book agrees with what God has taught you; not glad for the author's sake, but for Christ's sake, and for yours.—For Christ's sake, because I live, and preach, and write, to exalt that royal Saviour. Oh! how my heart longs to see him crowned in your soul; when you will go forth, as the command is, and see king Solomon with the crown of grace and glory on his head, “wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart:” then all within you will gladly bow to his sceptre. And for your sake, because he is begun to be crowned, since you say you have experienced some of the things in this little book. I wish I may help you, God helping me, to experience more of the glorious majesty of our King of kings, when I come down and preach at —, upon that text: and when I am setting forth that sovereign Prince and Saviour, may his Spirit then crown him in your conscience, and enthrone him in your heart. But I cannot come the day you mention, because it is my last Sunday at St. Dunstan's; and the week after, I go down to Brighthelmstone, and shall be there for a fortnight, and then set out for your place.

Till that time come, I will be wishing you what I am always desiring for myself, a stronger sense and

clearer feeling of my wants, and more faith to live upon Jesus for the supply of them. When you have nothing in yourself to be pleased with, all wretchedness and helplessness, then should Jesus be most precious—he being the Almighty Saviour of such a wretched helpless creature. A man that has a plentiful table, thinks it a happiness that he sits down hungry and thirsty: so should you, when every thing within you is saying, ‘Here you can do nothing—there you can do nothing, without Christ.’ Then faith should say, ‘It is true, I cannot; but he has in him that very thing which I want, and he has promised to give it me, and on him I depend for it.’ Such a dependence is heaven upon earth. I find it so; nor would I have it otherwise. What would become of me, if I was rich and increased with goods, and found no need of any thing? Why, then I should not feel my want of Christ: I could not live upon him, and so should become comfortless. My dear friend, believe me, I have been trying all ways to happiness, but all have failed me till this one; and here I am settled. I want nothing but Christ. People tell me, I must submit to this ordinance, and be joined to such a church, and come under church-discipline, and must be dipped, &c. &c. I have Christ—I want no more. This is making Christ of him. And this saves us from ten thousand thousand snares and troubles in life. I assure you it has brought me such peace, as I scarce thought it possible to have in this world. Excuse me, then, when I wish you poorer and poorer every day, that you may be richer in Christ. I shall not cease to remember you as above, till you hear further from

yours in that most sweet and lovely Christ, the fairest, yea, the very beauty itself, of all the fair ! O how I love him, and he loves a poor wretch !

W. R.

LETTER X.

Hartlepool, Aug. 7, 1764.

I RECEIVED my dear friend's letter, and think she overlooks our ever adorable Jesus, in setting any value upon a poor dirty worm. If his grace raise it from a dunghill, and set it upon a throne with his princes, who shall have the glory—the worm, or Jesus? Shall any of his due praise be given to it? God forbid ! There ought to be a holy jealousy in you and me, that we rob not our God of his glory. If we do rob him of ever so little, he will wither all our comforts and graces; but if we give him all the glory, which we cannot do unless he be all, and we be nothing, then every thing will go well with us. We get exalted as we are humbled. The lowest is the highest; which makes me fear to look at any good in myself, unless the kind hand which gave it me be seen at the same time; and afraid to hear of any thing good in myself, unless I am sure my Master has all the praise. The plan upon which I act herein is this, (long experience and many humblings have brought me to it,)—I have grieved to see how much of my time ran to waste, partly for want of knowing what to do, and partly through perplexity about what was done, lest it was not done aright; and therefore, I was led to endeavour to bring the

business of every day into a little compass, that, at one view, I might satisfy myself whether I had answered the end of living another day.

There is no doubt left about my belonging to Christ; so that this matter is not to be brought into court again. It has been tried and determined, and is now a settled point. What have I then to do? What is the work of every day? Why, it is to be living still in a constant dependence upon the Lord Christ, and to be growing every day in the knowledge and experience of that dependence.

The dependence is thus expressed, "The just shall live by his faith:" being justified, or made just, he shall not live by any works, by any stock of grace, by being faithful to any talents received; but he shall live upon the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, receiving from him continually grace for grace.

The believer's growth in this his dependence is thus spoken of: "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge and love of God our Saviour." Grace is the free love of God to poor sinners, in the whole plan of salvation; from first to last all is of grace: and in the knowledge and experience of this there is a growth. The believer learns more clearly that all is of grace, and that he has no hand in saving himself, but an empty receiving hand. Grace comes to pull him down, and to set Christ up. When the heart is established with grace, the creature is stripped quite bare, without a rag to put on, or money to buy any, or wisdom to know where to get it. Grace pulls down all high things, levels all distinctions, and leaves the poor creature nothing at all to trust in, or to boast of, but to live upon Christ's alms: so that

the sense of our lost, guilty, helpless state, is the only thing which can make us willing to receive a whole Christ; and the abiding sense of this will keep us willing to live upon a whole Christ. And while a believer lives thus, how can he grow in grace, if he be not discovering every day more of the depth of iniquity which is in him? Grace cannot be magnified, unless nature be humbled. Jesus Christ cannot become more precious, unless self becomes more vile. As the believer sinks in his own eyes, Christ rises in his esteem. And this, in my opinion, is growing in grace. Growing in the sense of our weakness, magnifies Christ's strength—our sinfulness his righteousness—our folly his wisdom—our misery his happiness—our outward sorrowful state, his inward peace and joy. Thus the growth in the knowledge of Christ is closely connected with the knowledge of self. And that makes me afraid of any thing which tends to weaken this view of things; because it would weaken my dependence upon Christ. I should not see nor feel my want of him so much, which would stop the working of faith, and thereby eclipse the glory of Jesus. You see my jealousy. And, indeed, I have great reason for it. After all my experience, which you have read in the 'Life of Faith,' I have a revolting heart. Still I would turn from, and live without Christ, if I could. Pride puts me upon it. O it is the very devil, that pride! It attacks not the heel, but the heart of Christ, and wants to rob him of his crown. And I have so smarted for it, that the most distant approach is terrible to me. Think what you will of me, but never mention me, without mentioning the grace of my

dearest Lord, who has made me all that I ever shall be, but sin and misery.

My sweet Jesus hath contrived so much work for me in these parts, and he is so evidently and powerfully with us, that I cannot leave my neighbours, who crowd to hear far more than ever, and they are to me as my own soul. We are, beyond all description, happy in our loving, lovely Lord. Such meetings I never knew—and twice a day—and many churches open. O that I could but stay! I am so knit in heart to my neighbours, and the most of them come and sit quietly to hear, that I know not how to leave them. But it must be. Adieu, my friend; remember yours in our precious Emmanuel, W. R.

LETTER XI.

Dec. 29, 1764.

ALL the blessings of this good season be with my dear friend. That man, for whom Christ was born, is the greatest, richest prince upon earth: his revenues, his honours, his mighty allies, his everlasting kingdom, are beyond all conception. Compared to what he is and has, crowns and empires are but playthings for little children. And he comes to all his dignity by Jehovah's taking flesh; through which wonderful event he can be made one spirit with him. He took our flesh, that we might take his Spirit; he was born on earth, that we might have a new birth from heaven; he took our sins, that we might take his righteousness; and our miseries, that we might be heirs with him of his happiness. O what

an astonishing transaction is this ! How full of the richest grace, flowing over with everlasting love ! This great and blessed event lay in the breast of Jehovah in eternity. He ever had it in his heart ; it was his beloved plan and purpose that he would take flesh, and display all the glories of his Godhead in the person of Jesus Christ. This was his gracious will and everlasting counsel, to which all his works have tended, and for the executing of which, in its full perfection, all things are now working together. When the fulness of time was come, O what joy was there in heaven among the angels who kept their first estate ! They thought it a very high honour to be the messengers of it, even to poor shepherds, with whom they could rejoice that their God and our God was become incarnate : “ Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy.” Glad tidings indeed ! for they include all the good which infinite mercy has to give, and the sinner can receive. Hereby light comes to them who are sitting in darkness, and life to them who are in the shadow of death—pardon to the guilty—comfort to the mourning—liberty to the captives—strength to the helpless—and heaven to the miserable. How blessed a change do they experience, when by faith they know, and can say, “ Unto us a child is born ; unto us a son is given ?” For this is the saving truth, “ Jesus is the Christ ;” the man is Jehovah, God and man in one Christ ; the child born is the mighty God, and the son given is the everlasting Father,—the virgin’s son is Emmanuel, God with us, and her infant babe is her eternal Saviour. Except she had believed this, she could not have been saved, nor can

we; and yet it is a truth so far out of the reach of man's understanding, that he could never have thought of it, unless it had been revealed; nor can he now comprehend it, unless he be taught it of God; for no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, is Jehovah, but by the Holy Ghost. Here then, my dear friend, is matter of thankfulness to you and me, that we are taught this of God. Happy Christmas to us! since we have lived to hear and understand the great mystery of godliness—"God manifest in the flesh." Happier still, that we believe it; for whomsoever the Holy Ghost enlightens with the knowledge of this saving truth, he also gives faith to receive it—to trust in Christ as God—to depend upon him as the Almighty Saviour—to rely upon his finished work—and to lay no other foundation for any grace or glory, but the life and death of this ever-blessed God-man. This is the way in which the Holy Ghost glorifies Jesus, he gives the believer such views of the infinite fulness, and everlasting sufficiency of Emmanuel, that he is quite satisfied with him. His conscience is brought into sweet peace, through the sprinkling of the blood of the Lamb of God: and when guilt would arise, and unbelieving fears disturb, he is enabled through faith in Jesus to maintain his peace; because, whatever rendered him hateful to God, he sees it removed by his adorable Surety; and whatever God could love him for, he finds himself interested in it, through the infinitely precious obedience of the Lord our righteousness. Thus he enters into the promised rest; thus he maintains himself in it. He can desire nothing, but the Saviour has it; and when he asks, he receives

it from him : so that the Saviour more than fills up all his wants—for he satisfies all his wishes : he says, by sweet experience, “ This is all my salvation, and all my desire.”

And what greatly adds still to this happiness is, that it is ever, ever growing—may you and I find it so ! As the believer is made to see his absolute safety in Jesus, so does he partake more of his graces and blessings. In hearing and reading the descriptions of the Lord Christ in his divine person, and in his most gracious offices, the Holy Spirit sets in with those descriptions, and presents the inestimably glorious Saviour before the eye of faith with the most attracting loveliness. All the sweets, and beauties, and joys scattered throughout the universe, are only little drops out of the ocean of Jesus’ fulness. There is not any object made to gratify any sense, but the Holy Spirit shows the believer that very thing in its highest perfection in the infinitely rich Saviour, and gives him a delightful earnest, and by faith a foretaste of it. By which means his whole heart and soul grow entirely in love with that beauty of all beauties, and he says, and it is heaven to feel it, “ This is my beloved, and this is my friend.”

W. R.

LETTER XII.

Feb. 14, 1765.

My dear Friend,—I shall be filling up this paper with ——. First, Thanking my dear Master for his great kindness to you. From my heart I praise him—may you and yours give him the whole glory of his *temporal and spiritual* blessings.

Secondly, I pray him to continue his kindness to you—a thankful temper always has fresh matter for thankfulness. To praise him for the past, is the sure way to secure future mercies. Prayer and praise live and die together.

Thirdly, I tell you of his goodness to me. I am nothing but a miracle of his goodness—the most astonishing that ever was! All, all from my first breath to this I am now drawing is mere mercy and grace, and so it will be for ever and for ever. My ministry is wonderful, that such a dumb dog should speak—such a very devil in flesh should feel what he says of that eternally precious Jesus, and be the means of making others feel it, and should have no doubt of feeling it blessedly to eternity. O what delightful views do these things give me of my sweetest Lord and dearest Jesus! He seems willing I should preach more, and have a church in the city: but he will not let it come too easily, lest we should have whereof to glory. We are at law about it, and are like to be a great while, but in the meantime he is doing all things well. The very moment all things are ready, the church will be opened: and if it never is, he does not want me there, with which I am satisfied.

Fourthly, Does all this teach you and me to trust this dear Lamb of God? It should teach us, I hope it does. How safely may we trust his faithfulness; how happily rest upon his almighty love! All things for the good of soul and body are promised to him that believeth. O that the Lord may increase your faith and mine! In an hour of need may you find him very, very near to your heart, and filling you *with joy and peace in believing.*

To Jesus I commend you and yours most heartily, being tied to you in him by the bonds of his everlasting love. Jesus bless you. Amen. W. R.

LETTER XIII.

May 25, 1765.

MY dear Friend,—Having an opportunity of sending a note by dear Mr. ———, I could not withhold my pen. What thanks ought we to give to our gracious Lord for his mercies to you! What ought you yourself to give! Can you look back upon any part of your life, especially the last part of it, and is there any thing upon which you cannot write, “This is mercy?” O, it is all, from first to last, to them who are chosen, and called, and believe, and live by faith of the Son of God, mercy—from everlasting to everlasting! A mercy before time, a mercy in time, a mercy beyond time! Where is the fountain-head, the spring of this mercy? In the covenant of the eternal Three. What gives rise to it? Nothing but the mere grace and free love of the divine Persons. A motive cannot rise but in the purpose and breast of God himself. But on whom do the streams of this fountain flow with their quickening, comforting, sanctifying, glorifying streams? On the miserable, and none else; for none else are the objects of mercy. On such as you and me. Mercy has made a rich provision to supply all our wants, to pardon all our sins, to save us from all misery, to entitle us to all glory. And what! is mercy chiefly glorious in reserving all its blessings

to another world? the greatest it does, but not all. All are now enjoyed in reversion by faith; and all things are working together in Jesus' hands to bring about the full and final enjoyment—that the mercy which is above all the works of God may have for ever and ever all the glory.

So far I wrote on Saturday night, on Mr. ——— sending me word he should go on Monday.

Sunday Morning.

What a mercy does this day call to our remembrance! The Saviour, risen and ascended, sends down the divine and faithful witness for himself—"He shall testify of me"—bear witness to my person, to my work, that they are both divine—my person, Jehovah self-existent—my work, as perfect as Jehovah could make it. He shall testify of my grace, how free it is, how full it is, and shall enable the sinner, any poor wretch, however vile in his own eyes, to trust his soul in the hands of Jesus. And having enabled the sinner to do this, then he will testify of Jesus, that he has received him, that he is safe in the arms, and may be happy in the enjoyment of Jesus' love. Thus he will make the soul enamoured with Jesus; there will appear such consummate beauty, such infinite loveliness in his precious person, as will eclipse the glory of all other lovers. There will appear such true happiness in fellowship with him, as will quite dethrone the former idols. And when the foolish heart would depart, he will not let it. Then will he testify of Jesus, "To whom wouldst thou go? Who has eternal life to give, but him? Turn, turn again to thy rest, O my soul!"

If the soul is mourning—He will testify of the joy that is in Jesus. If the soul be burdened—Cast the burden, says he, on thy Lord. If the soul has lost any creature-comfort—Let it go, says he, Jesus is still thy salvation, and thy great reward. If the soul be grieved with indwelling sin—It is pardoned, says he, and the Spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus, hath made thee free from the law of sin and of death.

Whatever the wants of the believer are, the Spirit's office is to testify of Jesus, *there is the thing you want*; and to glorify Jesus, *there you have it freely*.

My friend, what mercy is this! The Spirit Jehovah abides with you, to testify of Jesus and his perfect salvation; and to glorify Jesus, by enabling you to live safe and blessed upon him, making him not only all, but also all in all. And when he has taught you thus to glorify Jesus, he will keep you (Oh, that is sweet!) by his almighty power, till he bring you to the heaven of heavens—the sight and enjoyment of dear Jesus, eternally dear and lovely Jesus.

Is it indeed so? Why, then, commit yourself to this glorious Emmanuel. Wait for the Spirit's teaching you all his ways, and showing you all are well. Remember, he has lent you your chief earthly comfort, only just so long as he pleases. When he takes it, hush, not a sigh: "Be still, and know that I am God, a sovereign"—This commands resignation: but the Lamb's voice is all love. I take it away, that you may love me more, and be happier in my love. Let it be so, my dear Lord; be thou but present, all is well. The Lord bless you and
yours,
W. R.

LETTER XIV.

Nov. 1, 1765.

WHAT am I, the very vilest of the vile, that any of the Lord's people should look on me ! But to think of his looking on me, whose eyes are a flame of fire, and yet to look with love ; O what an humbling thought is that ! I declare, the more I daily learn of myself, I grow more amazed how Jesus should love such a one. But he is all grace, or rather grace is Jesus—not something distinct from him, but he himself—his name, because it is his nature. Unto him be the praise of your kindness to one who has not a single thing to recommend him to your regard but what Jesus' free grace has most marvellously bestowed upon him. Let him have the glory ; for he richly deserves it all. Whatever good I receive in this world, spiritual or temporal, I am indebted for it to his mere bounty—I crown him for it. Take it off my head, and put it upon his. This is heaven below ; for they are doing the same in heaven above. As we throw the crown of grace at his feet, so do they the crown of glory. Thus through him I thank you for your letter, and for all your favours.

As to what you write about my not calling on you in my journey, your disappointment was not, could not be greater than mine. I learned from it a good lesson. It is very profitable to take notice of what providences say : they have a tongue, and speak loudly ; and the spiritual ear hears, and receives

instruction. You see what man is, and what dependence is to be laid upon him. As I was going along the road, I heard a voice saying, "Cease ye from man," from yourself, from others: put no confidence in them, in your own good, in their good, or in any good to be received from them. The command is, Put not your trust in princes, nor in any child of man, be he wise, or great, or esteemed good. Nay, look not at them, but with a single eye look unto Jesus. In him you will see every thing to put your confidence in—Grace, matchless grace in his heart and lips, beauty beyond compare, riches unsearchable, honour infinite, righteousness everlasting, holiness holy making, and that for ever. And all these he has to give, freely to give, to the unworthy. Look at him, believing, and he is yours, and all he has and is. The sight will change you into his image. As the sun shining puts his glory upon every object, so does Jesus. O cease then from man—look not at blind man, dark and benighted—look not at this heavy thick earth, nor at any of its glittering toys: they shine only as shined upon. Cease from them all, and look to Jesus. The good Spirit direct and fix your eyes and mine upon him, till we see heaven in his face.

The same voice still pursuing me, I perceived that I was not only to cease from looking to man and all human things, but also to cease from depending on them. I was not to live upon them. I could, as it were, hear a voice, "Live not upon us, but live upon the Prince of Life." He is a never-failing fountain of life—He speaks, and the dead live—His voice makes and keeps alive. We live by him,

and live on him, and in him. All other persons and things but him, concern only the perishing, dying life of the body; but the life which he gives is his own spiritual, divine, eternal life. I cannot wish you a greater blessing than to hear with power, and to find what I did in my journey—*Cease ye from living upon man, and live upon me.* So we do, Lord Christ; the life which we now live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God.

From hence I was led to see the necessity of ceasing to hope for happiness from all these things about us. They have it not to give. It grows not out of that earth which lieth in wickedness, nor can it be increased by any good under the sun; because it is one of the perfect gifts which cometh down from the Father of lights. And when it is given by his grace, and received by faith, then this true philosopher's stone turns all things into gold. Faith living upon Jesus can turn those things into happiness, which in their own nature could produce nothing but misery. Wonderful transmutation! it changes darkness into light, death into life, weakness into strength, sin into righteousness, mourning into joy, hell into heaven. By this faith we have Christ in us, the hope of glory. Christ dwelling in the heart; and where he is, there all he has is. All things are ours: salvation from all evil, a title to the love of God, and to the glory of God, and a fitness also and meetness for the eternal enjoyment of God in his love and glory. Cease ye from man, then, and all is yours. O may you and I learn to cease from all schemes of happiness in any object, but in Jesus. The more we live to him, the more dead he will make us to every thing else. He

will let you love your relations, nay, he commands you to love them; but then you must take them from him as his bounty, and use them as his gifts, dependent on his sovereign will, free to give, free to take away, when and what he pleases. When your will can be made thus really resigned to his will, then he will make you happy, and you will feel something of their blessed oneness with him, who have no will but his, and therefore follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. I mark what you say upon that point. A resigned will is not where there is no rising of the flesh against God's will, but where there is victory over the will of the flesh. Pray take notice of this; and try whether you have not this evidence of your adoption, that you desire the Father's will, and not yours, may be done.

I am labouring at Brighthelmstone among a sweet people, with whom I am exceedingly happy. The work of dear Jesus prospers among us. His person grows more beloved. His work more precious. Fellowship with him more close and intimate, and therefore more happy. Our hearts warmed with his love, are warm with brotherly love, stirring up one another to press forward for the prize of our high calling, that is, to win Christ, and be found in him at the hour of death, and at the day of judgment. May the same Lord Christ grow dearer to you and yours every day!

I am always bound to pray for your welfare, being
by many ties yours, W. R.

LETTER XV.

ALL spiritual blessings be on my dear friend ! whatever the tender heart, or the almighty arm of the loving Jesus has to bestow, may it be all yours !

What a life is this ! hurry, hurry, hurry, from place to place, from this object to that ;—weary with seeking, but never finding rest. Happy Christian, who is fixed to a point ! Go where he will, **ONE** object is his **ALL**. The crucified Saviour is his happiness, his perfect, everlasting happiness ; and this heaven he carries about with him. No time, no place, no circumstances make any change. He has one Lord, one faith, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Come pain, sickness, poverty, death, the Saviour's love and power bear him up. Come temptations of all kinds, I will be with thee in the hour of temptation, says the Lord God. Where he is, nothing need be feared, because nothing can hurt. O my friend, the true knowledge of Jesus Christ is an infallible cure for all the miseries which come into the world by sin. There is no evil of mind or body, temporal or eternal, but our precious dear Lord is by office engaged to remove it. And shall not you and I value and love him ? What can we set our hearts upon, what can bid so high for them as this adorable Saviour ? May he enable us to give them to him, and then he will sanctify all their inferior loves ; will let us love them as flowing from his grace ; so that this love will make us love him more. This love is heaven. All joy and glory is in it. And as for the

happiness of his redeemed people, we shall never know how great it is till we join the church above. It will be a glorious meeting. Jesus bless you! Amen, amen! I am, for his sake, your faithful friend,
W. R.

LETTER XVI.

Nov. 25, 1765.

MY dear Friend,—I have much to tell you of that ever-dear and precious Lover, your best friend and mine. I had a token of his goodness in your last, for which I thank Lady M——; but, above all, her Lord and mine. I have a tale to relate of his free and kind heart, which will last longer than this world. It is really heaven to be relating it, and I cannot hold my tongue. He makes himself so lovely by continual favours, that my heart is quite won, and by his sweet constraint is now fixed upon him. I would turn to other lovers, but sweet Jesus will not let me. O the boundless grace of his most amiable breast! Finite nature cannot tell (how should it?) his infinite love. But as we get emptied of self, we know and experience more of his love. This I wish you and my very dear Miss ——: growth in grace, that is, self-abasement; and growth in the knowledge of God our Saviour. May he empty you of self, and fill you with more of his good things. We have very much of his presence and glory in our assemblies this winter: more than ever. His work revives amongst us; and, cold and frosty as the weather is, our hearts burn within us. Last night St. Dun-

stan's was a very Bethel : it was like the dedication of the temple, when the glory of Jehovah came down and filled the house. I was preaching on these words, " My meditation of him shall be sweet." And so it was indeed. When I was setting forth his undertakings, his suitableness to fulfil them as God-man, his actual fulfilling of them, his power to apply and to make them effectual ; how he does this by his word preached, in the hand of the Spirit made the means of working faith in the heart, and of producing the fruits of faith in fellowship with Jesus and his fulness, by which Jesus grows sweeter and sweeter, and so brings us to the end of our meditation, the sweetest of all, even of divine sweets, the enjoyment of Jesus in his kingdom of glory ; O what a seal did he set to this preached gospel !—he made it the power of God. The meditation of his goodness yesterday has still a relish and delightful savour ; to-day it is sweet, very, very sweet indeed. Pray, mind I do not make this my salvation. No ; but these sweet streams lead me to the fountain. I do not rest in them : but if these be so sweet, what must the fountain be ? If little faith finds Jesus so precious, what must precious Jesus be, when faith yields to sight and sense ? My dear, dear friend, prize this pearl, it is inestimable. Two things I would beg your notice of—I know you have received him :

The first is, Press for more knowledge. Read, pray, hear, to be made more teachable and humble, that Jesus may have the glory of such discoveries as he makes of his person and of his work. And do not stop : press on as long as you live ; sit very low, very low at Christ's feet, to hear his words.

The second is, Make use of his fulness. You are welcome; you cannot use it too much. Hence comes sweet fellowship, and by it all things will do you good. Carry them to that best friend, pour them out into his loving bosom. He delights in familiarity. You have been ill; that is the best for you: live by faith, and Jesus will make it plain to you. Yours in that incomparable Lover, W. R.

LETTER XVII.

Lambeth, Jan. 16, 1766.

My reason for writing is to inquire after you. How can I help being concerned for those whom I love, especially in the Lord? Such friends I have at ——. It would be a real pleasure to me, and a profit to yourself, if I knew what to ask for you when I go to court. How is your bodily health? I know you are generally weak and low, and I know it is good for you, yea, the best of all for you. The Physician who never mistook a case, prescribes to your tender constitution. His prescription is perfect love. He could not bring about his gracious designs any other way: he wants to wean you from a life of sense, therefore in infinite mercy he takes away sensible enjoyments. He would have you to go on from faith to faith; but how could faith grow so fast, as by keeping you from those things which are its very bane and destruction? He is bringing you to more fellowship with him than you have had; therefore you must have less fellowship with the world. Fewer outward comforts will cer-

tainly make you experience more spiritual comforts. This is our Physician's fixed practice; he never varies from it, not in one instance. Mind one of his favourite patients—"Thy rod and thy staff comfort me." The afflicting rod could not comfort, pain could not be pleasure, no chastening can be in itself joyous: but the staff, the being supported under the rod, and the feeling of that support, he found faith and patience bear him up under the rod, which brought him to such close communion with his gracious Saviour, that he was comforted under the cross. This is also the experience of one highly favoured, as you may read, Rom. v. 3—5. Let me know, then, how your soul prospereth under Jesus' care.

I have another reason for writing, which is to wish you a happy new year, the happiest of all you ever saw; and therefore I wish you more, still more enjoyment, of our infinitely rich, everlastingly precious Jesus. You will live to a blessed purpose, if every day of this new year you get more out of self, and live more *in* and *on* Jesus. We have had a most remarkable time this Christmas of his grace and love. I have scarce an acquaintance who has not been favoured with blessed visits from him. O how great is his goodness! how great is his beauty! incomparable both! May your dear heart, my friend, feel what I did at the Lock on Innocents' day, when I was preaching on these words of Psalm lxxxvii. "All my springs are in thee." I gave them first a translation of the psalm, then a paraphrase, then application. The substance of the two first I send you. The psalm, literally rendered, runs thus:—

The title is—"For the sons of miserable man a *psalm to be sung.*"

Ver. 1. 'He is to be established in the mountains of his Holy One.'—Mind how sweetly the Holy Spirit begins: he mentions not who this He that was to be established is, for all who are under his teaching know.

Ver. 2. 'Jehovah loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.'

Ver. 3. 'Weighty things are spoken of thee, thou city of Alehim. Selah,' attend to this.—What this love in ver. 2. was for, what these weighty things in ver. 3. were, the next words show, where God the Father is introduced speaking:

Ver. 4. 'I will cause it to be remembered by them who knew me in Rahab and Babylon; behold Philistia, and Tyre, the people of Ethiopia; *here was the name born*'—born in Zion, to be the Saviour of Rahab and Babylon, Philistia and Tyre, and Ethiopia, even as many as the Lord our God shall call in these countries.

David, speaking by the Holy Ghost, adds, in

Ver. 5. 'And of Zion it shall be said, A person and a person (God and man) shall be born in her; and he himself, the Most High, shall perfectly establish her:' namely, the church founded upon the incarnate God, against which, he says himself, "the gates of hell shall not prevail."

Ver. 6. 'Jehovah shall record it, when he is describing the people, *that here was the name born*'—that divine name in which alone there is salvation, and from which all true joy both in heaven and earth ariseth, as the saints sung in the Old Testament, as the angels sung at his birth, and as the redeemed of the Lord will sing for ever.

Ver. 7. ‘ And the singers, as well as the players on instruments, shall say, All my springs are in thee,’ (all, all the springs of grace, of glory, all arise from Jehovah manifest in the flesh.) O that such a spring as we had at the opening of these words may flow into and refresh your heart quite through the wilderness till you come to the fountain-head; may you still drink of the water which flows through the rock Christ, till you drink of that which flows from the throne of the Lamb. And so it will be: the Rock will follow you, and you will have the comfort of it, if you keep in mind that little word *in*, “ All my springs are *in* thee,” not only from thee, through thee, (which is true,) but in thee. If faith fix here, all will be well. For if at any time the stream fail, then you may go up to the fountain-head, making up your happiness in Jesus. Get you whatever it be, little or much, in present comfort out of his fulness, yet still he, and all he is and has, is yours.

W. R.

LETTER XVIII.

Lambeth, Feb. 4, 1766.

ALL the blessings of Jesus’ love be with dear ——. I was not in a hurry to answer your letter, because the time was at hand when my lord chancellor declared he would end the affair of Blackfriars. You have heard of the event. My friends are rejoicing all around me, and wishing me that joy which I cannot take. It is my Master’s will, and I submit. He knows what is best, both for his own glory,

and his people's good. And I am certain he makes no mistake in either of these points. But my head hangs down upon the occasion, through the awful apprehensions which I ever had of the cure of souls. I am frightened to think of watching over two or three thousand, when it is work enough to watch over one. The plague of my own heart almost wearies me to death; what can I do with such a vast number? Besides, I had promised myself a little rest and retirement in the evening of life, and had already sat down with a "soul, take thine ease." And, lo! my fine plan is broke all to pieces. I am called into a public station, and to the sharpest engagement, just as I had got into winter quarters—an engagement, too, for life. I can see nothing before me, so long as the breath is in my body, but war—and that with unreasonable men—a divided parish, an angry clergy, a wicked Sodom, and a wicked world; all to be resisted and overcome: besides all these a sworn enemy, subtle and cruel, with whom I can make no peace, no, not a moment's truce, night and day, with all his children, and his host, is aiming at my destruction. When I take counsel of the flesh, I begin to faint. But when I go to the sanctuary, I see my cause good, and my Master is almighty—a tried friend, and then he makes my courage revive. Although I am no way fit for the work, yet he called me to it, and on him I depend for strength to do it, and for success to crown it. I utterly despair of doing any thing as of myself, and therefore the more I have to do, I shall be forced to live more by faith upon him. In this view I hope to get a great income by my living. I shall want

my Jesus more, and shall get closer to him. As he has made my application to him more necessary and more constant, he has given me stronger tokens of his love. Methinks I can hear his sweet voice,—“Come closer, come closer, soul; nearer yet; I will bring you into circumstances that you cannot do one moment without me.” O that you could always hear that voice, it would be your heaven! and indeed it is his language—nothing but love is on his tongue; but the noise of the flesh sometimes drowns his small still voice. Comfort would flow into your heart like a river, if the ears of faith were but open to attend to the endearments of Jesus. “Soul, thou shalt not live at a distance from me; I bought thee with a great price: thou art mine. When I afflict, it is to bring thee nearer to myself; to make thee glad in me; to bring thy heart to me. Thou shalt not make up thy comforts in the streams; come, come up nearer, nearer still, to the fountain-head. To make thee, to force thee to live happy in my fulness, I will dry up the streams, and so will I teach thee to make me all in all.” The infinitely lovely Lamb of God teach you this lesson! All his word preaches it, all his providences proclaim it. Every cross says, Go to Jesus, live near his bleeding heart, or else I shall break the back of your patience. Every difficulty says, Go to Jesus, and he will make you strong in the power of his might to overcome. The world, and all the things in it, say, and the believer has ears to hear, Go to Jesus, there is no good in us—it is all in him. Whatever comes, I go to Jesus with it, and all is well; his smiles are humbling, his rod is sanctifying; in all his dealings he is good, *and doeth good.*

I know these things as well in theory, as I see the words upon the paper. But to practise them is indeed hard, except in his strength, to whom all things are possible: in it and by it all the things we meet with will not only bring us to live more upon Christ, but will also bring us to live more to Christ. By doing the one, we do the other. He that makes him all, shows forth most of his praise. What can glorify Christ like that believer who attempts nothing without consulting him, undertakes no work or duty but in his strength, rejoices in nothing but in Jesus, and in his salvation? O that you may learn, my dear friend, thus to exalt King Jesus! I would have you to be ever bringing some honour to him, by making him your all in deed and in truth. Praise his fulness by living always upon it, and then he will make you always happy. Let him be all your salvation, and all your desire: all your salvation, as to the merit of it; all your desire, as to the efficacy of it; all your salvation in purchase; all your desire in enjoyment. So he is in heaven: O that we could make him so upon earth!

I have one favour to beg of you. Do not refuse me. You see my station—you hear my difficulties. Will you remember me to Him who calleth the things that be not as though they were. He can send to war at his cost, and for his glory. If you love me, make mention of me when you go to court. Pray for usefulness and for humility. I cease not to mention you.

W. R.

LETTER XIX.

July 22, 1766.

My very dear Friend,—I am wishing for your prosperity in body and soul, but above all, that your soul may prosper: and it is in the most thriving state when you are lowest and vilest in your own eyes, and Jesus alone is eyed and esteemed. This is growth. And self is kept down, so Jesus is exalted. O what views have I of this manner of growing in grace! Let me talk to you freely of it at our next meeting, as I have learned it not from books, but from God's word, and God's teaching.

I am learning, though dull, how to eye him in all things: as it is my privilege, so I find it my happiness; but, alas! alas! I am a miserable learner. However, I set out afresh, and resolve not to give over aiming at my lesson. Do ever so well, I would do better, for I see in him worlds of beauty and glory, which will take up a long eternity to study, and, what is best of all, to enjoy. To my dear, dearest Jesus, I commend you and all yours. I am, very sincerely, yours in our common Lord, W. R.

LETTER XX.

Lambeth, Nov. 15, 1766.

I AM indebted much to my dear friend, but among other things I owe you a note of hand, which I am now ready to pay. I wanted to talk with you at

— upon the temper and disposition of a true believer; but, being prevented there, I promised to send you my thoughts upon this subject, which I am the more ready to do to-day, because the reason of my making the promise not only still subsists, but is also increasing. A temper directly contrary to the Christian is spreading among professors. I see the delusion grow, and I am a witness to the baneful effects of it. How many have you and I heard of who want to be something in themselves, and, rather than not be so, will be beholden to Christ to set them up with a stock of grace! They would gladly receive a talent from him, that, by being faithful to grace given, and trading well with it, they may look with delight on their improvements, and thereby hope to get more grace and more glory. This is the Popish plan, the Arminian—very flattering to nature, exceedingly pleasing to self-righteousness, very exalting, yea, it is crowning *free will*, and debasing King Jesus. I would be more jealous than I am over you in this matter, if I had not seen how the Lord teaches you, and warns you of this rock. Your frequent indispositions are his sweet lessons, by which he would bring you to the true gospel-frame of spirit, which is this:—It is the proper work of the grace of Jesus, to humble the proud sinner, to make him and to keep him sensible of his wants, convinced always that he has not any good of his own, and cannot possibly of himself obtain any, either in earth or heaven, but what he must be receiving every moment out of the fulness of Jesus.

The devil fell by pride, and he drew man into the same crime. He promised him independence, and

he still persuades deceived man to set up for himself. That is the scheme of all unawakened men—they are resolved to be happy in spite of God. The Spirit of Jesus is sent to humble this proud sinner, which he does, by giving him a view of God's holy nature, and God's holy law. This makes sin, and consequently the sinner, hateful; discovers his guilt and his danger: if he attempts to do any thing to make God love him, the Holy Spirit humbles him for that very thing, by showing him the sinfulness of his motives, and the imperfection of the action. Whatever he seeks to rest in, the Spirit of Jesus detects the false foundation, till he leaves him no resource but to believe in the only-begotten Son of God. So that when he comes to Jesus he is stripped of all, quite naked and blind, moneyless and friendless, empty of good as the devil and sin could make him. This is all the fitness and preparation for Christ which I know of. And when Christ is thus received, the same Spirit which would let him, the sinner, bring nothing to Christ, will now make him bring all from Christ, and so keep him sensible of his wants. He will teach the believer more daily of his poverty, weakness, unworthiness, vileness, ignorance, &c. that he may be kept humble, without any good but what he is forced to fetch out of the fulness of Jesus. And when he would go any where else for comfort, to duties, frames, gifts, and graces, (for pride will live, and thrive too, upon any thing but Jesus,) his Spirit makes them dry and lean, and will not let him stop short of the fountain-head of all true comfort. In short, he will glorify nothing but Jesus. He will stain the pride of all greatness, and

of all goodness, excepting what is derived from the fulness of the incarnate God.

I know one who learned this very slowly, but has had much pains taken with him; and to make what I have been saying more plain, I would illustrate it by his experience. He was a very, very vain, proud young man: knew almost every thing but himself, and therefore was mighty fond of himself. He met with many disappointments to his pride, which only made him prouder, till the Lord was pleased to let him see and feel the plague of his own heart. At this time my acquaintance with him began. He tried every method that can be tried to get peace, but found none. In his despair of all things else, he betook himself to Jesus, and was most kindly received. He trusted the word of promise, and experienced the sweetness in the promise. After this he went through various frames and trials of faith, too many to mention, and he is now got, where may Mrs. ———, your dear sister, get, and as far beyond it as you can.

First, He has been brought to a clear conviction, that all fulness of good is in Jesus, as clear, as that all the sap in the branch is from the stock on which it grows, as that all the nourishment in the member is from the body. What has the branch or the member, except what they receive? Now this continual receiving from Jesus, every thing saying, "You must go to him, you must go to him," is a most humbling lesson. And my friend says, it is nothing but this which crucifies his pride; he has been attempting for many years to be something, to do something of himself, but could not succeed: dis-

appointed again and again, yet he would not give it up, till God made him feel, in him, that is, in his flesh, dwelled no good thing: and now he writes folly, weakness, sin, on all that is his own; not only clearly convinced that all fulness of good is in Jesus, but is also, in the second place, content it should be in him. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." It pleases the Holy Spirit to testify of his fulness, and to glorify nothing but it: and by his teaching it, pleases the believer. He is made quite satisfied that all fulness should dwell in that dear God-man: content to have nothing but what he must go to him for; yea, happy to go to Jesus for those very things of which he himself is empty, and which he cannot have any where else. My friend's heart glows, and his very countenance brightens up, and one catches fire at his words, when he is talking upon this subject. "O," says he, "that you did but know what I experience in living upon the fulness of Jesus!—God's will and mine are one in this matter—this subjection to his will is heaven regained; so I find it. I rest perfectly on the fulness, and I enjoy most sweetly what God has laid up in it for my use. My conscience has a peace that passeth all understanding, through faith in the blood of the Lamb. I see myself in him perfectly accepted, perfectly justified, perfectly comely in his comeliness, perfectly happy in his love—all the desire of the soul satisfied with Jesus' person, and Jesus' work. This, this is the death of pride. Here free-will, self-righteousness, a legal spirit cannot work. The spirit and power of Jesus in this his glory makes them hide their heads."

This is living like a Christian. It is a life, in one respect, only below an angel's; and yet great and blessed as it is, I have heard my friend talk in a very uncommon strain upon a state even beyond this, which he calls heaven enjoyed, and that is,

Thirdly, He is thankful that all fulness dwells in Jesus—not only is convinced of it, and content with it, but also blesses God for it being in Jesus. This is all they do in the highest heaven, and he has most of heaven who does this most like them. My friend describes his meaning thus: "I live out of myself—I nothing have, I nothing am, but folly and sin—Jesus is my life; in him is the fulness of its being, and of its comforts: whatever I want, I find it in him. I experience day by day the kindness of his heart, and the bounty of his hand. Blessings on him, my heart enjoys what no tongue can describe. Whatever I go to him for, he always sends me away with matter of thankfulness. Constant fellowship with him endears to me his person more and more. Communion with him in his offices makes him infinitely lovely. Partaking of his overflowing love, makes it everlastingly precious. And living upon the fulness of these, is the fulness of joy. Glory, glory be to God-Jesus for ever and ever: Heaven and earth say with my heart, Amen."

Thus does my friend illustrate the definition which I give you of the true gospel frame of spirit. I hope we shall live to talk of it, and live to enjoy it more. Nothing else is worth living for. All means of grace are only useful as they help us to live thus. All providences, sicknesses, losses, successes, are only so far blessings, as they lead us more out of ourselves

into the fulness of Jesus. My dear Mrs. ———, I can write to-day upon nothing else. I hope I write seasonably. When you open this letter, you will want this lesson. I am sure you will, and God bless it to you. I follow it with my prayers, and I can do no more; but our common Lord will hear, I know he will; and will accompany my poor words with his presence. To the care of his dear loving heart I commend you and yours. Wonder not I have not written before; I have been in a more preaching way this summer than I ever was in my life, and travelled much more, and have had with me a sweet savour of Jesus' dear name. O he is precious to my soul; how much, even now, I shall want time in eternity to tell: so precious, that I think I have not long to be here, or else the matchless Lover will make this earth a very heaven. But I say, I the vilest worm that ever crawled or escaped hell, not to set me up, but him, the high exalted worthy Saviour. Again to him I commend you. Yours truly in him,

W. R.

LETTER XXI.

Lambeth, Jan. 24, 1767.

My very dear Friend,—I have waited till I am quite wearied out. No tidings could I get, till Mr. ——— told me of your state. Pray give me some account, for indeed I long to know about these matters. The letter was upon a subject that I scarce ever mentioned before to any body; it was my own experience; and I would not have it lost for a great

deal. I have been trying it by Scripture, and I could give you infallible proofs of its being agreeable to the word of God; and perhaps may, when I hear from you next. It will be some satisfaction to me (as I never take copies of any thing) to read my own history at ———. Before that time I may have got a little lower, and have drank deeper into the knowledge of Jesus. That seems to be the end of living, to have self abased, and Jesus exalted; and these two are inseparable. As self sinks in esteem, Jesus rises. When self is nothing but sin, then Jesus is a glorified Saviour. When self is nothing but misery, then Jesus is all heaven. I have been led to take particular notice of this lately from these views:

First, The person of Jesus; he was Jehovah. All the glory of the Godhead was in the man Jesus. And what was his appearance? mean, to the last degree. A worm, and no man, the very scorn of men, and the outcast of the people. What was his form? a servant, a poor servant. What were his tempers? meek and lowly, yea, meekness and lowliness itself; a perfect original, of whom all his disciples may learn to be meek and lowly. His way to glory was humility; so is ours. His glory, indeed, was his humility; so is ours. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, was true of the head as well as of the members. O that you and I may be in this conformed to him! because herein,

Secondly, Our fellowship with him consists. Whatever a man sees in himself great or good, is an absolute hinderance to the enjoyment of Jesus. Whatever he sees vile and wicked, therein (if he has faith) he will enjoy the Saviour. The more he sees, the

more enjoyment: for that which humbles the sinner brings him nearer to the Saviour. The humblest sinner is capable of the closest communion, and is thereby fitted for the largest communications of Jesus' love. The emptiest hold the most, and the emptiest receive the most. O for daily emptying! This self, this full self, what reasonings, what legality, what self-righteousness has it, and all to keep us from being filled with the fulness of Christ! this is your grand enemy, that idol *self*. The Lord crucify it by his own almighty grace! and to induce you to apply to him for this power, I would recommend it to you,

Thirdly, In reading the Bible, take notice of the persons to whom the promises are made. Their character is always one and the same: the poor in spirit; the contrite and broken in heart; the hungry, the thirsty, the meek and lowly. Take this general promise as an instance, "God giveth grace to the humble," and with grace he gives all things. See how I get writing on without intending it: I only sat down to inquire about you, and all our dear friends; Miss —— at the head of them. Lo! here is a long scroll started up. In love remember me to all friends, and, if you please, with my hearty prayers for their welfare at ——. Mine eyes have tears for them. Dear Jesus reveal himself so to you in his glory, as to eclipse all created good, and yourself especially. So prays a poor sinner.

W. R.

LETTER XXII.

March 21, 1767.

MY dear Friend,—I begin with telling you how your last refreshed me. It was a seasonable feast; for I was in a sad taking about the account which I had sent you of myself, having never found any freedom to do it to any body living before; and I feared either it should be lost, or fall into any other person's hand. I am glad it is in yours. Now you know whereabouts I am, and what my present state is, it may be of some use to you to be informed how I was brought into it. God's dealings with me have been wonderful, not only for the royal sovereignty of his richest grace, but also for the manner of his teaching, on which I cannot look back without adoring my meek and lowly Prophet. He would have all the honour (and he well deserves it) of working out, and also of applying his glorious salvation. When I was in trouble and soul-concern, he would not let me learn of man. I went every where to hear, but nobody was suffered to speak to my case. The reason of this I could not tell then, but I know it now. The Arminian methodists flocked about me, and courted my acquaintance, which became a great snare unto me. By their means I was brought into a difficulty, which distressed me several years. "I was made to believe that part of my title to salvation was to be inherent—something called holiness in myself, which the grace of God was to help me to. And I was to get it by watchfulness, prayer,

fasting, hearing, reading, sacraments, &c. so that after much and long attendance in those means, I might be able to look inward, and be pleased with my own improvement, finding I was grown in grace a great deal holier, and more deserving of heaven than I had been." I do not wonder now that I received this doctrine. It was sweet food to a proud heart. I feasted on it, and to work I went. It was hard labour and sad bondage, but the hopes of having something to glory in of my own kept up my spirits. I went on, day after day, striving, agonizing, (as they called it,) but still I found myself not a bit better. I thought this was the fault, or that, which being amended, I should certainly succeed; and therefore set out afresh, but still came to the same place. No galley-slave worked harder, or to less purpose. Sometimes I was quite discouraged, and ready to give all up; but the discovery of some supposed hindrance set me to work again. Then I would redouble my diligence, and exert all my strength. Still I got no ground. This made me often wonder; and still more, when I found at last that I was going backward. Methought I grew worse. I saw more sin in myself instead of more holiness, which made my bondage very hard, and my heart very heavy. The thing I wanted, the more I pursued it, flew farther and farther from me. I had no notion that this was divine teaching, and that God was delivering me from my mistake in this way: so that the discoveries of my growing worse were dreadful arguments against myself, until now and then a little light would break in and show me something of the glory of Jesus; but it was a glimpse only—gone in

a moment. As I saw more of my heart, and began to feel more of my corrupt nature, I got clearer views of gospel-grace; and in proportion as I came to know myself, I advanced in the knowledge of Christ Jesus. But this was very slow work: the old leaven of self-righteousness, new christened *holiness*, stuck close to me still, and made me a very dull scholar in the school of Christ. But I kept on, making a little progress; and as I was forced to give up one thing and another on which I had some dependence, I was left at last stripped of all, and neither had, nor could see where I could have, aught to rest my hopes, that I could call my own. This made way for blessed views of Jesus. Being now led to very deep discoveries of my own legal heart, of the dishonour which I had put upon the Saviour, of the despite I had done to the Spirit of his grace, by resisting and perverting the workings of his love, these things humbled me. I became very vile in mine own eyes; I gave over striving; the pride of free will, the boast of mine own works, were laid low. And as self was debased, the Scriptures became an open book, and every page presented the Saviour in new glory. Then were explained to me these truths, which are now the very joy and life of my soul. Such as,

First, The plan of salvation, contrived by the wisdom of Jehovah Alehim, fulfilled in the divine person and work of Jesus, and applied by the Spirit of Jesus. The whole was so ordered from first to last, that all the glory of it might be secured to the persons in Jehovah. The devil fell by pride; he tempted and seduced man into pride: therefore the Lord, to hide pride from man, has so contrived his

salvation, that he who glorieth should have nothing to glory in but the Lord.

Secondly, The benefits of salvation are all the free gifts of free grace, conferred without any regard to what the receiver of them is; nothing being looked at by the Giver but his own sovereign glory. Therefore the receivers are the ungodly, the worst of them, the unworthy, the chief of sinners; such are saved freely by grace through faith, and that not of themselves: it (namely, salvation by faith) is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.

Thirdly, When I considered these benefits one by one, it was the very death of self-righteousness and self-complacency; for when I looked at the empty hand which faith puts forth to receive them, whence was the hand emptied—whence came faith—whence the power to put forth the empty hand—and whence the benefits received upon putting it forth? All is of God: he humbles us, that we may be willing to receive Christ; he keeps us humble, that we may be willing to live by faith upon Christ received: and as it is a great benefit to have this faith, so it is,

Fourthly, A great, inestimably great benefit to live by faith; for this is a life in every act of it dependent upon another. Self is renounced, so far as Christ is lived upon. And faith is the most emptying, pulling down grace; most emptying, because it says, and proves it too. "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing;" and therefore it will not let a man see aught good in himself, but pulls down every high thought, and lays it low in subjection to Jesus. It is called "the faith of the Son of God," because he is the author and the finisher of it: he gives

it; he gives to live by it; he gives the benefits received by it; he gives the glory laid up for it: so that if I live to God, and in any act have living communion with God, it is by nothing in myself, but wholly by the faith of the Son of God. When I wanted to do any thing commanded, (what they call duties,) I found,

Fifthly, A continual matter of humiliation. I was forced to be dependent for the will and for the power, and, having done my best, I could not present it to God but upon the golden altar that sanctifieth the gifts; not the worthiness, not the goodness of the gifts, but the sanctifying grace of the great High Priest alone, can make them holy and acceptable. How low did this lay the pride of good works; since, after all, they were viler than dung, unless perfumed with the sweet incense of Jesus' blood and righteousness! Here I learned to eye him in all my works and duties, the alpha and omega of them; the life and spirit of all my prayers, and sermons, and hearing, and reading, and ordinances; they are all dead works, unless done in and by faith of the Son of God. Against this blessed truth, of which I am as certain as that I am alive, I find my nature kick. To this hour, a legal heart will be creeping into duties, to get between me and my dear Jesus, whom I go to meet in them. But he soon recovers me from the temptation, makes me loathe myself for it, and gets fresh glory to his sovereign grace; and as all the great and good things ever done in the world were done by faith, so all the crosses ever endured with patience were from the same cause; which is,

Sixthly, Another humbling lesson. I find to

this moment so much unbelief and impatience in myself, that if God was to leave me to be tried with any thing that crossed my will, if it was but a feather, it would break my back. Nothing tends to keep me vile in my own eyes like this fretting, and murmuring, and heart-burning, when the will of God in the least thwarts my will. I read the trial of your faith worketh patience; the trial of mine, the direct contrary. Instead of patient submission, I want to have mine own way, to take very little physic, and that very sweet: so the flesh lusteth. But the Physician knows better. He knows when and what to prescribe. May every portion purge out this impatient, proud, unbelieving temper, so that faith may render healthful to the soul what is painful to the flesh. And as no cross can be endured without the faith of the Son of God, so,

Seventhly, and lastly, There is no comfortable view of leaving the world, but by the same faith. These all, who had obtained a good report in every age, died in faith. On their death-bed they did not look for present peace and future glory, but to the Lamb of God. Their great works, their eminent services, their various sufferings, all were cast behind their backs, and they died as they lived, looking at nothing but Jesus. He was their antidote against the fear, and against the power of death. They feared not the cold death-sweat; Jesus' bloody sweat was their dependence. The dart lost its force on Jesus' side. The sting was lost in his corpse. Death stung itself to death, when it killed him. There is life, life in its highest exaltation and glory; in not breathing the air of this world. This life,

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through death, Jesus entered on, and we enter on it now by faith; and when our breath is stopped, we have this life as he has it, pure, spiritual, and divine. Because he lives it, we shall live it also. Yea, my dear friend, we, and you, and I, after we have lived a little longer, to empty us more, to bring us more out of ourselves, that we may be humbled, and Jesus exalted more, we shall fall asleep in Jesus; not die, but sleep; not see, not taste death, so he promises us; but in his dear arms sweetly go to rest in our wearied bodies, when our souls shall be with the Lord. And then we shall be perfect in that lesson, which we learn so very slow in this present world, namely, that from him, and of him, and to him, are all things: to whom be all the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

These are the things which God himself has taught me. Man had no hand at all in it. No person in the world, not I myself; for I fought against them as long as I could; so that my present possession of them, with all the rich blessings which they contain, is from my heavenly Teacher alone. And I have not learned them, as we do mathematics, to keep them in memory, and to make use of them when I please: no, I find in me to this moment an opposition to every gospel-truth, both to the belief of it in my head, and to the comfort of it in my heart. I am still a poor dependent creature, sitting very low at the feet of my dear Teacher, and learning to admire that love of his, which brought me down, and keeps me down at his feet. There be my seat, till I learn my lesson perfectly. That will soon be. There is nothing in his presence but what is like

himself. In heaven all is perfection. The saints are as humble as they are happy. Clothed with glory, and clothed with humility, with one heart and one voice they cry, "Worthy is the Lamb." They look not at, they praise not one another; but the Lamb is glorified in his saints, and will have from them never ending praise and glory for the glory which his sovereign grace has bestowed upon them. In a measure I now feel what they do. My heart is in tune, and I can join that blessed hymn—looking at him as the Giver of grace, (and grace is glory begun, *nota bene*,) as they look at him the Giver of glory. I can take the crown most gladly from the head of all my graces, as they do from the head of their glory, and cast it down at his loving feet: "Worthy is the Lamb." He is—he is—blessings on him for ever and ever!

Ought not I to say so, indebted as I am to that precious Lamb of God? You see how he has dealt with me—the kindness, the gentleness of his ways—his royal bounty—the magnificence of his love. Adore and praise him with me and for me. And learn, my dear friend, from what I have here related, to trust him more. When he shows you your vile heart, your poor works, when dreadful corruptions stir, and are ready to break out, go to him freely, boldly; stop not a moment to reason with your own proud spirit, but fall down at his footstool. Tell him just what you feel. He loves to hear our complaints poured with confidence into his bosom. And never, never on earth, will you get such fellowship with him, so close, so blessed, as when you converse with him in this poverty of spirit. Let nothing

keep you from him; whatever you meet with, let it drive you to him; for all good is from him, and all evil is turned into good by him. O wondrous Saviour! Here I was going on, and I hope in this theme never to stop—but the Rev. Mr. — is come in—one just ordained. I do not leave Jesus to talk to him, but I am going to talk to him of sweet Jesus. To him I commend you and yours. Believe me very truly yours, in that most lovely Lord Christ, most precious Jesus, W. R.

LETTER XXIII.

Lambeth, Sept. 27, 1767.

My very dear Friend,—I have been waiting for good news, but in vain. I wanted some satisfactory answer to your last, and though I can give you none, yet I take up my pen to make an apology for the great Lord, (who will not send you a minister,) lest you should begin to think hardly of him, and of me too, his poor servant. I would have you to remember, that the government is upon his shoulders—the government of heaven and earth. His church is the object of his special government. It is his *body*—bought with his blood, quickened by his Spirit, kept by his power, blest with his love. All its concerns are upon his heart: his eyes are upon —: he sees his people there with perfect complacency; and they shall want nothing that he has to give. Among the rest he beholds you and yours, and is managing all for your good. All shall be blessed to you—your relations, your house, your substance,

your state of body and of mind, your life and death, things temporal and spiritual. He will turn all things into blessings; for he does all things well. He does not, he cannot make one mistake in his government; no, not the least. He is wisdom, he is love, he is power itself. Infinite wisdom directs his love, and sets it to work; and, being almighty, he makes all things work together for the best to his dear people. You are as dear to him at ———, as we are at London. When he knows it to be right, he will send you a pastor after his own heart: and when he does not want one there, you cannot get one. When it is right you should be comforted, you shall be humbled, and then your consolations shall abound: and when it is right you should be low and mourning, he will bring good, yea, joy out of heaviness. Think of all that his power can do; his love disposes, his covenant binds him, to do it for his people.

O blessed Mrs. ———! what a happy woman are you! Jesus is yours. All he is, all he has, (and mind he is Lord of all things,) is yours. Who is like unto your Jesus? None, none in heaven or earth: for your friend has all power in heaven and earth, and he will use it for your good, to keep you, to guide you, to give you what is best, what he knows to be best; and has, as such, appointed for you in his wise counsel, and purpose of grace. Leave yourself, then, to his care and management; yourself and yours. Trust him for a pastor. Faith is the best way to get one. Ask of him, believing, and Mr. ———, or some you never heard of, shall be sent. Believe for your mercies, and you cannot want your

mercies. If you take notice of God's dealings, you will find that God never takes away what you are enjoying by faith. All things are possible, both to get and to keep, to him that believeth. And when belief goes, all goes. And well it is so: for that which is not enjoyed by faith, is not worth enjoying. It can bring no real good to us, and no glory to God; therefore we had better be without it. In this holy art of believing for our blessings, I wish you most heartily a great proficient. Faith alone makes the difference. I would have you daily to practise it for every earthly good thing you enjoy; then shall it produce a gladness of heart: but without faith it will not be to your true solid comfort, because not sanctified. You see how open I write, my very heart appears. For I know your weak side. There I fear for you; and my fear is a holy fear. I fear for God's glory, in the use of a comfort so near your very soul, and I know of no way but what I now tell you—*Believe for your mercies*. That will secure God's honour, and your comfort. To the sweet arms of the divine Lover I commend you and yours, that he would give you grace to trust all your earthly comforts daily in the Saviour's care. This I shall entreat for you, being very heartily yours in that loveliest of all loves,

W. R.

LETTER XXIV.

Blackfriars, Oct. 27, 1769.

My dear Friend,—Finding the cover of this letter yesterday, it put me in mind of our past corre-

spondence, and brought back into pleasing reflection many agreeable interviews with you and yours. I was resolved therefore to make use of this cover. Providence, I thought, had put in my way. It is to be sent as directed, to be a witness for me of my constant attachment to you and your family, as of my uninterrupted affection. Go, letter, and say so. Assure them that I am still the same in heart, in deed, wishing and praying to approve myself to be unfeignedly theirs. And tell them my reason: it is because, through grace, I am the same in heart, in deed, to my spiritual Friend; wishing and praying to approve myself to be unfeignedly his in all things. Upon better acquaintance I am become settled in my love, and rest in it. I have some little intimacy with the Friend of sinners, and what he manifests to me of himself increases affection. He teaches me to loathe myself; every day he lets me see and feel the total ruin of this body of sin and death, and will not let me look at any thing in or of myself, from whence I may draw one moment's comfort. Thus he makes himself more lovely. Self-loathing renders him precious. The more we get out of self, the more we grow into Jesus. Tired of our works and duties, we learn to value his righteousness. Feeling we cannot keep ourselves, we know how to trust his faithfulness, who hath undertaken to keep his people unto the end. O what a friend is this! whose love is like himself; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. This sense of his love makes his people loving. And his love to them is the bond of all their holy love to one another. Having put on Christ, they put on with him kindness, bre-

therly love, bowels of mercy, &c. Some of these, but I do not boast, I feel to you, and my dear friends with you. May our love be mutual, increasing continually in every sweet and holy affection. The love of Christ will constrain to this; it spreads like leaven. Every act not only brings forth, but also diffuses its sweet influence. Whenever I remember you, and make mention of you at our court, the King not only hears, but approves, and makes the love expressed to be love abounding. The holy flame spreads as it burns; so that every affection, as it increases in its attachment to our glorious Head, makes us more truly loving to all his members.

My dear friend, I wish you was more intimate with this loving Jesus. And why not? what has he done to make you shy of him? all your complaints about yourself are no bar: they are so many ties and bonds, constraining you to love him; yea, he will love to hear them from you, as matters of faith. Whatever you are, or feel of sin, misery, helplessness, &c. if rightly managed, should increase your knowledge of, and dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, all that you meet with, till you meet him face to face, should bring you into more experience of his perfect salvation, and of his free love to bestow it on such as you. By which means you would be growing daily in the excellency of the knowledge of your Lord, and would be more conformed to his image and example. May you and I increase daily in this heavenly friendship, and love him in our measure as he loved us. I am just returned from a journey of seven hundred miles; ashamed and confounded at his mercies to me and

mine; and yet to pour my praises to his grace, so mean my services in his own work, that I am forced to cry for mercy on my best sermons and labours. I am returned home self-abased, carrying this truth written on my heart, and desiring to manifest it in outward conversation: Let him that glorieth, glory only in the Lord Jesus. W. R.

LETTER XXV.

May, 1768.

THANK you, my good friend, for remembering me. I began to have some hard thoughts of you, but they are gone: time has taught me that old friends are better than new, and grace has improved this experience; for friends in Christ will be so for ever. We may part, but only to meet again. Love can reach from London to —; yes, a great way farther. I feel my heart just now united to —, and rejoice from my soul that Jesus has taken her up to himself: thanks be to him for the grace she had, and the glory she had received out of his fullness. Blessings on him that we are going the same way, to meet our best friend, and all our friends; and to be with him, our heaven-making Jesus, and to be with them for evermore. I was led, from reading your letter, to a very comfortable view of the Prince of Life. I thought I saw him in that character, exceedingly amiable and glorious; and the more I considered it, the more lovely it grew to the eye of faith. For it seemed to me that sin and death came into the world, with all their train of evils, that the

Son of God might be glorified thereby. Wonderful is his name, who can bring righteousness out of sin. What a miracle-working Jesus is he, who can make life out of death ! Indeed, all he does is in this strange way, peculiar to himself, that his might be the crown of crowns. As a Jesus, he not only saves from the evil of sin and death—this is the least part of his matchless work,—but he also, in the free gift of his sovereignty, bestows righteousness and life ; and, to the everlasting praise of his sovereignty, bestows them on the most unrighteous, and on the most dead in sin. In this praise, how glorious is our Jesus ! My heart is now captivated with this inimitable loveliness, although I see him through a glass darkly : what must he be in full and open view, when the display of his beauty will make an eternal heaven ! I knew one who was admitted as that happy soul was, (Cant. ii. 9.) to see the divine Lover looking forth at the window, and showing himself, (or, as it is in the margin, *flourishing*,) opening and expanding, like a flower, his beauties and fragrance through the lattice window. It was a ravishing sight. If the eye and senses of faith can be thus highly delighted, what will it be to see him face to face, and to enjoy his fulness of glory ! Since he thus, by the death of our friends, can let us behold some fresh discovery of his life-giving charms—what, O what will it be to us, when mortality shall be swallowed up of life ! Yet a little, a very little while, and this shall be. In the meantime, may you and I be growing in the knowledge and love of the Prince of Life. I got a good advancement by the death of Lady M——t, and was led into a sweet path

of meditation, in which I went on meditating and contemplating till my heart burned within me. Methought he had given a noble display of the riches of grace in his dealings with her, and had made her a happy partaker of that life which he came to give unto his world. You can witness that he had repealed the sentence of death. She was freed from condemnation, and was passed from death unto life. He gave her to know it, to enjoy it. Many a time my spirit has been refreshed with hearing her relate, simply and feelingly, how Jesus was her life. And in consequence of this, having peace with God, through Jesus Christ her Lord, she had an attachment to his person. You can tell better than I can how she showed this. She was certainly spiritually alive; and he who made her so kept her so, to as great manifesting of his power as if he had preserved the burning bush in Horeb in flames, and yet unhurt, from Moses to this day. This spiritual life bodily death cannot touch, because it is rooted and grounded into the divine life. And the keeping of it is laid up with Christ in God, safe, happy, out of the reach of storms and enemies. What did I say?—bodily death cannot touch it? I retract that word. Bodily death does what the angel did to Peter in prison—knocks off his fetters, and sets him at liberty. The angel of life takes down the mortal that he may perfect the immortal life: and so we die to live; die to the world to live with him; die to time to live for ever; yea, die in faith, that this body of death which we leave behind us shall soon be raised to life and immortality. Is death our enemy? what has he done to hurt? Only fulfilled the kind will of Jesus, who

wanted her company, and would have her with him, to live as he does in his life of glory. Blessed death ! heavenly comforter ! thou art a loving friend indeed to Jesus' friends. Your letter was the means of my entering on this meditation, and blessed it was. O what a sight and sense had I of the incomparable grace of life-giving Jesus ! While I am writing, he makes himself, beyond what any words can describe, lovely to my eyes, and precious to my heart. He is my life ; I find it, enjoy it in him. And let me speak, my dear friend, a word for him to you : *for him*, as I am in duty bound,—*to you*, as love constrains me. For him, I speak a most complete, absolutely and eternally perfect Saviour. His person, his work, possessed of all the glories of the Godhead. What he did and suffered, in order that he might save to the uttermost, admits of no addition. It was once done and perfected for ever. My friend, have you the benefit of this ? Do you enjoy it in your conscience, and there read, and there maintain, a full and everlasting repeal from the sentence of death ? This is the honour Jesus claims of you. And it is the highest you can pay him. You can do him no greater homage, nor more acceptable worship, than to put your entire dependence, without any the least drawing back or wavering, on his life and death, as your whole deliverance from sin and death, as your clear title to heaven and glory. When faith shows you the divine majesty of Mary's son, and the everlasting honours of his obedience unto death, then will the peace of God rule in your heart, and thereby you will glorify the blood and the righteousness of the Redeemer, more than any angel, more than any happy spirit around his throne.

The enemy long, too—too long kept me from that enjoyment by wiles and snares, chiefly legal views and self-righteous plans. Still he now and then gets an advantage of me. But I beg, my friend, you would beware of his devices. Are you resting upon Jesus? and do you find the sentence of death is no longer in force against you? Read, study your Bible, pray and beg for an increase of faith. This is the use of all means. May the Lord the Spirit bless them to you! Faith is your shield against the accuser of the brethren, and against your own legal workings. If you grow in this experience, you will grow more and more alive to God; you will believe, and find more of the love of a reconciled Father. The more you rest on the finished salvation, you will certainly abound more in the blessed fruits of it: such as, seeing yourself perfectly saved, your hopes will all cast anchor within the vail, your affections will get fixed on their everlasting object, and you will come under the sweet government of King Jesus. Thus living *in* him, you will live *to* him; which is not only spiritual life, but is also, indeed, spiritual liveliness. And if you ever find this decay after you once had it, mind and attend to the cause of its decay, and you will see this was the only cause; namely, your faith was therefore not lively, because you was not resting perfectly upon Jesus, as your Saviour from the sentence of death. This was the worm which eat into the gourd, and made it wither. Keep this out: it will flourish and grow as long as you have any need of faith for protection or for happiness, and when the time comes that faith is to be no more. What is dying? Is it not in the hand

of Jesus? Does not he appoint it, fix it, send it? Has not he promised to be with you in the hour of death, to keep you from the fear and from the power of it? Is not he faithful, almighty, all-loving? His love wants no power to make his promises good to his dying friends; yea, he does make them good every day. He will to you, doubt it not. I have written till my time is up. You are sure my subject is not exhausted; no, never will be. But I am forced to stop. My dear friend, pray for me. You know my profession of love for your soul. God knows my heart. Adieu. W. R.

LETTER XXVI.

June 11.

THANKS to my dear friend for her last. It was a great refreshment to me. O how does my spirit rejoice to see the blessed Jesus crowned and exalted in your soul, and no other name mentioned in your lips, no dependence upon any being or thing in your heart or life, but that God-man! This is the point. Here may we fix. But, alas! although I would fix, and never so much as turn my eye from hence, I find so many enemies within and without, that it is hard keeping our hold, and never letting it go. In this warfare the flesh and the Spirit fight without ceasing: the flesh against Christ's sufficiency, and the Spirit for him. But, thanks be to his grace, the Spirit is almighty; and he has given the flesh, in all believers, a mortal wound, of which it will ere long bleed to death. And then—O blessed prospect!—

we shall see the Captain of our salvation, through whom we conquered, face to face. That is enough. There is heaven. May you and I, till we get there, learn daily to make more use of Christ. Our dear fellow-soldier, Lady H——n, fights bravely. She went to Brighthelmstone this day se'nnight. I had a sweet letter from her this morning. She is happy in the adorable Emmanuel, and lives to him and for him. Her only view in Sussex is to carry his glad tidings to a wretched ignorant people. He has hitherto prospered her design; and, while he smiles upon it, I believe she will not give it up.—Your faithful friend and servant,

W. R.

LETTER XXVII.

Blackfriars, May 2, 1769.

I WROTE to my good friend at Christmas, and got an answer at Easter. Indeed I began to think you had dropped me; for I make myself sure of nothing but of my dear Lord's unchangeable love. Yet I corrected myself for thinking so of you: but I was tempted, and I have combustible enough to feed any, yea, every temptation. The Lord keep me from others, as he did from this.

You ask my opinion of inoculation. People who reason upon worldly motives may do as they please. To others I would relate the case of a great doctor in divinity, and a great Christian, who had an only son. His wife was for, the doctor was against inoculation. They had many disputes about it. The doctor said he could not do it in faith; the wife said

she could do it, because she believed it to be for the best. Neither side would yield: so they agreed to put it off till the one or the other should give up their opinion, and both be of one mind. The child was thus left in God's hand: he got the small-pox in the natural way, and did well.

I attend to your complaints of yourself. They are true. You might make a thousand more, and alike true. But, my dear friend, what of all this? Is not Jesus the Saviour of such sinners as you are? Pray take heed of getting into a complaining temper, and contracting a habit of it; for there is no greater enemy to Jesus, to the growth of your communion with him, and to the liveliness of your heart towards him. I would have you sensible of all your causes of complaint, but satisfied under them, and willing to be just what you are. In this poverty of spirit, needy, sinful, helpless, dependent temper, consists the very life of faith: for while you feel thus, every thing in you and about you says, "You must go to Jesus—you can do nothing without him—he must counsel, and strengthen, and comfort—he must save—he must be a Jesus to you every moment, and in every thing." What reply does the believer make? "It is true, without him I can do nothing; I am helpless, and his strength is perfected in my utter weakness. Most gladly therefore do I glory in my weakness, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me." O for more of Paul's happy experience! He had no such gladness as that which arose from communion with Jesus; and he gloried in that which helped him to this communion, by making it absolutely necessary for him. He did not commit sin on

purpose; but, being a sinner, he did not wish not to be one in himself: it was his joy, yea, his crown of rejoicing, that God-Jesus and sinful Paul were one. Here he found his heaven: Jesus was united to the sinner, as meat is to the hungry; and Paul lived upon him, feasted on him, enjoyed Jesus, as the hungry do their meat. It was such a feast, that Paul would not wish to have no appetite, but rather to have it enlarged, that he might live more upon the bread of God, and grow up more into Christ Jesus.

What! must I always be this poor needy sinner? Yes, always till you get into heaven. And then you will be perfectly humbled, and have nothing within you to rob Jesus of any part of his glory. All your salvation, from the counsels of eternity to the eternal fulfilment of them, will then be made plain: you will see, confess, and be happy in confessing, that sovereign grace did all for you, and in you. And in the perfect sense of this you will triumph in being a sinner saved, and in this you will triumph as long as heaven is heaven.

But thus you keep on complaining: "I find myself too often poring over my own inward sinfulness and misery, and consequently giving way to unbelief, whenever my poor reason tells me I should be rejoicing in the God of my salvation." And what then, unbelief is in you, felt or not; and unbelief given way to, is your burden: this makes for you. And it only proves that you are still at school, learning your second lesson; and that is, how the God of your salvation, being received, is to be enjoyed. You own he is received. You call him the God of *my* salvation. Observe, my dear friend, now this Jesus is

yours, *all* is yours. You have an undoubted right and title to him and to his: improve it then, and make use of his fulness. Your estate is clear and boundless; you have only to receive the income of it in grace, as well as in glory. I pray you, my dear friend, to study this lesson; and if the Lord the Spirit help you to learn it well, it will save you from many an aching heart. Observe, Jesus is yours: after this you are not to seek for any new title to any part of salvation. This is also secured: but you are called upon to enjoy the purchased salvation, and to be a happy receiver out of the Saviour's fulness. Suppose you live thus ever so well, receive ever so much, what you enjoy in Christ is no part of your title to Christ. What you receive from Christ is not your title to pardon, to righteousness, or to holiness. He is received for these purposes—He, Christ himself; and your enjoying him for these purposes is not your title to pardon, &c. What Christ does for you, or in you, or by you, is not to be looked at so as not to look still simply at Christ himself. What he is, and what he did for you—here is all your salvation. What he does in you, or by you—here is the enjoyment of this salvation in its fruits and effects: but these fruits and effects do not make you holy. O no! the poor beggars who are fed at our King's table will never say, We pay the King for our meat by eating a great deal; or, His meat feeds us, and therefore we make ourselves strong; or, His grace nourishes us, and therefore we make ourselves holy. No, no; they are taught better. They will always acknowledge, The more we receive out of the fulness of Jesus, we find ourselves more happy; and

the fruits of our interest in him are more abundant to our comfort and to his glory: but our debt increases; and the better we are fed, and clothed, and kept up with his royal bounty, he leaves us nothing to glory in except his overflowing grace. In this spirit his people hear, and read, and pray, and attend means and ordinances. They do not seek holiness in these—not to be made holy by them—but they do attend in faith, sanctified first by the faith that is in Jesus, and in that faith enjoying him in all they do. Christ is my sanctification before I can do any thing aright; and what I do aright does not make me holy, but shows that I am holy. Every living branch is ingrafted into the root and stock of holiness, and its leaves and fruit do not make it to be in the vine, but only prove that it is in it. A member is not made living by doing its office. The eye does not live by seeing, but it is a living eye, and therefore sees. You must be a living member in the mystical body, before you can do your office in it. Doing your office does not make you, but only shows that you are a living member. My dear friend, weigh these things well. I verily believe the Holy Spirit is now teaching you this lesson; for I see you cannot be content with yourself, nor your graces, nor gifts: improve this divine teaching, and learn to build all your hopes of holiness on Christ, made of God sanctification for you. And the more clearly you believe this, you will love the God of your salvation more; your spiritual enemies will be more subdued, and in heart and life you will be more devoted to God, to his ways and will. I give you this advice from my own *knowledge*. Give me credit, and try, and you will *soon find cause to give God his glory*.

I hope to look upon you, and say on this subject more than I can on paper. Remember me in love and respect. The good-will of your unchangeable Friend be with you and yours, and me and mine.

W. R.

LETTER XXVIII.

Brighthelmstone, July 20.

JESUS be yours, all he is, and all he has. Then you will be as rich as an archangel. We go on sweetly in this place. Christ is indeed exalted, and reigns glorious in many a heart, as I wish he may in yours. He does—but not as you could wish. May he captivate you more with his infinite beauty, and enable you to live more blessed upon his infinite fullness, that he may keep his royal court in your soul ! The more you are acquainted with him, you will grow in love ; for he is altogether lovely ; an immense ocean of everlasting love. The whole world is but a drop of his love—what must heaven be, where his love is to be glorified and enjoyed for ever ! There we shall see him : oh, for that day ! But even, by the way, as he walks with us, he makes our hearts burn within us. These sweet foretastes of his love draw us on, and whet an appetite. A few more of these, and we shall get to the fountain-head, and drink rivers of pleasure for evermore. To his precious dear heart's love I commend you and yours, and am, for his sake, your friend and servant,

W. R.

LETTER XXIX.

Blackfriars, March 5, 1770.

MY very dear Friend,—I waited on —, and he told me he was to call at — in his way home. I could not resist the opportunity of sending in writing my thanks for your last kind letter. My heart rejoices, and is thankful for many things which you say in it, of your dependence on the finished salvation of Jesus, and of your desire to experience more of his graces and blessings. I see what stops you; the very same that stops me. And I would lay before you the gospel motives and encouragements to get on, revealed in the word, and I hope in some measure made useful to me by the Spirit of God.

I have remarked in conversing with you, and in all your letters, the workings of a legal and self-righteous temper, apt to nurse guilty fears, and to cherish misgivings and suspicions of your interest in the great salvation. The same are daily disturbing my peace, and are the very plague of my life. The only remedy against them is to look well to the conscience, where they have their rise, and to use all appointed means for establishing it in the peace of God. This is the main point. A holy walk, and successful warfare, depend entirely on the testimony of conscience. The believer's chief business is to learn to resist and to overcome guilt, fear, and unbelief, that these being kept out of his conscience, the peace of God may rule there always, and by all means. Then it will be what the Scripture calls a

good conscience. And when this is good, all goes on well. Now, that is a good conscience which witnesses to the truth as it is in Jesus. Conscience, I suppose, is that faculty of the soul, which, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, compares the sinner's heart and life with the holy law of God, brings him in guilty for transgressing its precepts, and leaves him under guilt and condemnation, to suffer its just penalties. The gospel sets forth to him an infinitely perfect righteousness to satisfy the precepts; and an everlastingly sufficient atonement, even the sacrifice of Jehovah Jesus, to satisfy the penalties of the law. When he is enabled to believe in this righteousness and in this atonement, his conscience is saved from guilt and condemnation; yea, it acquits and justifies the sinner, and brings in a true verdict for him. It says the same that God himself does: pleads its discharge from the express words of the great charter of grace, under the broad seal of heaven. With the royal grants and immunities therein graciously vouchsafed, it stops the mouth of unbelief: "Thou art freely forgiven all trespasses; thou art justified from all things; thou art a son of my love, and shalt be an heir of my glory: I, even I, the Lord God, am thine, and thou shalt be mine for ever." Here the believer triumphs; and why may not you and I too? I do, thanks be to infinite grace. I believe these words on the testimony of God, as spoken to me. My conscience bears witness to the truth of the divine record. It is now a good conscience: it agrees with God, and looks upon him as reconciled perfectly; it fears to dishonour him, by calling in question the infinite value of Christ's righteousness

and atonement, or by doubting of their being mine, while I feel my want of them, and have any dependence upon them. Thus the peace of God rules, takes the lead in the conscience, and subdues guilty fears; rules always. The covenant is like the divine covenanter in the Godhead, always the same; the free grant of the righteousness and atonement of Emmanuel always the same; my want of them always the same; and mine interest, though not in my sense, yet in God's purpose, always the same. These gospel-motives should teach you and me to maintain this peace always, and by all means. Every thing should help to promote it. Corruptions, enemies, temptations from every quarter, should, by all means, establish our hearts in the peace of God: we should be trying at it, fighting for it; and, as it is our privilege, we should never yield, but fight hard to keep a conscience void of offence. This is warring a good warfare, when we hold the mystery of faith in a pure conscience.

Believe me, my dear friend, the management of your conscience is the first and great lesson in the school of Christ. And your chief mistakes and falls come from its not being governed by the word and Spirit of God. Look to it, then, and hear, and read, and pray, and walk; that the testimony of your conscience may be agreeable to the truth as it is in Jesus. Insomuch, that when you feel any thing wrong, when you are low in spirits, your sins displease, your duties cannot please you, you should remember that these very things, rightly managed, will establish your conscience in the peace of God; because they will bring you to live entirely by the

faith of the Son of God. Every new day you live to learn from them, that you have nothing to trust to but the righteousness and the atonement of Jesus; and, therefore, depending on this sure foundation, you may safely build your hopes of God's being in friendship with you, yea, in an unchangeable and everlasting friendship. O that your heart may be sprinkled from an evil conscience; and mind, that is an evil one, which, through unbelief, refuses to build its peace upon the life and death of Emmanuel. And that is a good conscience, which has peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord, and expects all the love of the Father to come freely through his Son. This is the second lesson in the school of Christ—"How shall the heart be made and kept happy in the love of God?" I answer, by believing that he is perfectly reconciled, and loves you. While there is guilt in the conscience, and you look upon the law broken, the punishment deserved, and the almighty Judge engaged to inflict it, you can no more love God than you can love pain. But when you hear the gospel preaching peace by Jesus Christ, and can mix faith with it, then God is discovered as related to you in the closest bond of love, even your dearest friend, your most loving Father; which will draw out the affections of your heart to him: "For we love him, because he first loved us." His love is first, yours is second: his is the cause, yours is the effect. He enables you to believe his love to you, and that excites your love to him.

You see, then, how much depends upon the testimony of the conscience. When this is on Christ's

side, and bears a faithful witness for him, then your heart will be happy; you will have joy and peace in believing: "God is reconciled to me; he is my God; we are agreed, and now we walk together. He bids me call him Father; and I know he has bowels of love and fatherly affection for me: he sees me, accepts me in Jesus, and rests in his love to me. My title is clear to all spiritual blessings; because, God being my God and Father, all things are mine."

If you live like a Christian, these should be the constant breathings of your heart. Your happy walk depends entirely on the belief of God's being perfectly reconciled to you in his Son. And therefore, you should not be aiming at getting any new title to your heavenly Father's love, but at new enjoyment. All is yours in title; but you are to seek for more, still more possession: every day you should be seeking to believe more, to enjoy more of the riches of your Father's love in Jesus. And nothing will stop your growing enjoyment, if the peace of God rule in your heart always, and by all means.

My dear friend, attend closely to this: for want of it, O what sad mistakes have I made! You will always find, when your heart departs from the Lord, that there has been some guilt lying upon the conscience, and representing God to you in some other light than as your most loving Father. But pray mind, he has always the affection, as well as the name. He changeth not in his love. He is to all his children ever of one mind. And therefore, when you desire to enjoy his love, and in the enjoyment of it to find your heart happy, look at nothing to bring you to the Father but the Son. Read your share

in his love, take possession of it, for nothing done in you, or by you, now, or at any time, but only in and for the salvation of Jesus, in whom his Father is your Father. Thus walk with him; making Christ your way, and Christ your end. Keep walking on, leaning upon Christ every step for strength, for victory over all corruptions and over all enemies, which would try to stop you from the enjoyment of your Father's love. Trust in Christ for all the blessings of it, for every thing that can keep you safe, and make you happy all your way: and depend upon it, through Christ, you will find the company and presence of your God and Father a very heaven here, as well as in glory.

Mrs. ———, would you daily walk with a happy heart? Then you must learn to make up all your happiness in the love which the Father bears to you in his dear Son. This is to be all your salvation, and all your desire. You must look quite away from your graces, your gifts, your duties. God does not love you for these: he loves you in his Son; and you, in believing this, are to exercise your graces and gifts, and to be found in the way of duty, that you may have fellowship with him in his love.

This is the hardest task of all. I find it so to this day, and I know your temptations; therefore, I would finish this long scrawl with an account of the influence of the former truths. Get a ready answer to this question, "How are my tempers to be regulated, and my conversation to be so ordered, that I may night and day enjoy the peace and the love of my reconciled God and Father?" The way is, to "walk humbly with your God." Do not disown

what the Holy Spirit has taught you: give him the honour of his own grace: he has, indeed he has, learned you to say, "Abba, Father," God is your Father in Jesus. Walk humbly with him, as such: so will you enjoy his sweet peace, and partake of his happy love. While these rule in the conscience and in the heart, the tempers opposite to them will be resisted and overcome. The divine Teacher will discover the secret workings of guilt and unbelief, and keep them from destroying the peace of conscience. By his almighty grace he will mortify carnal affections, and crucify every idol-love: he will preserve the heart, as a chaste virgin, for its heavenly Lover. Rebel nature will resist, yea, always; but it cannot overcome the Lord God omnipotent; he will bring all things into subjection to himself. He will; nay, let me say, he has. I appeal to yourself. Speak out for God. Does not your conscience say, "I will have nothing to do with any pretensions to be my own saviour; the righteousness of Jesus and his atonement on the tree, are all my salvation?" Does not your heart say, (I am sure I have heard you say,) "This is all my desire?" Do not your hopes say, "We have cast our anchor upon Jesus; thank God we can never be disappointed?" Do not your fears say, "I would not for the world do any thing to displease my God and Father. Blessed Spirit, rule in me, rule over me, mortify the old man, and quicken the new man day by day?"

Since God has done all this for you, O do not dishonour his work by hearkening to proud self, the old man of sin, who is ever reasoning within you against the glory of divine grace. He would have

you to look at yourself, and to draw your safety and happiness from some pleasing views of your own goodness. He will be always tempting you to this : but remember that you are not to look at, or to depend in the least upon, yourself, but wholly upon God reconciled in Jesus. Whatever is your own, and comes from self, is to show you the necessity of "walking humbly with your God." Do not you feel to this hour, that self is made up of sinfulness, wants, temptations, and miseries? None of these should stop you, but each should help to make you walk more humbly with your God. They are to show you your constant need of salvation, and to keep you always dependent on God for it. No failings in duty, no sense of indwelling sin, no weakness, no opposition, should separate you in conscience or heart from your reconciled God, but should bring you to walk in nearer fellowship with him : by which alone you will enjoy more conformity to him. Pride will be hid from you. Every high thought will be brought down : grace, sovereign grace, will reign. And the Lord will receive all, I am sure it is his due, all the glory.

Here is a wide field before me : but I stop. When you send me word that you have learned so to manage the weapons of your warfare as to be able to maintain peace in your conscience, and happiness in your heart, and victory in your tempers and walk, then I will take up the subject where I leave off, and go on with it. In the meantime, remember this great truth, God is your Father in Jesus ; you know it by faith ; yea, you enjoy the comforts of it ; and therefore, the end of your walk is not to procure a

title to your Father's love, but to maintain the enjoyment of it. May the Lord the Spirit make you a happy partaker of it every day more abundantly.

I hear of the goodness of our dear Lord to ——. I bless him from my heart for her. May she never want his rich cordials to comfort her soul as long as she has a body of sin and death to struggle with. My respects to all that family. May God sanctify the present dispensation to every one of them.

My kind love to Mr. ———, and to Mr. John, and every good wish for that favourite child. He grows a fine boy, and says many pretty things. Take care, my friends, of your hearts; he has rather too much room in them. Grow in love to the Giver as you grow in love to him, and all will be well.

W. R.

LETTER XXX.

My good Friend,—I have many reasons to remember your being last year at Bath. Among other things, I sent you down the first lesson which the great and good Master teaches all his scholars. I cannot tell how well you learned it. But I understand he is very kind to you, and is taking a great deal of pains to make you a proficient. He sees how desirous you are of going to heaven, with this and the other comfort by the way: you are apt to think, as I do, that being such an infinitely loving Lord, he might very well spare it you—you might keep it, and yet keep his love. But herein we form a wrong judgment of him. For he does all things

well; yea, he intends to do better for you, far better than you can even imagine. He loves you more than you can possibly love yourself; and he will send you nothing but what is for your real and best interest, and he will let you find it so. His love is almighty, and it is unchangeable. What cannot he do, what will he not do, when his heart is set upon blessing his people? It is a common thing with him to bring spiritual good out of temporal evil: he can extract pleasure out of pain; yea, he can enrich by impoverishing, and turn losses into gain. Unto you it is now given, as a matter of his choice favour, not only to believe on him, but also to be conformed to him by bearing his cross. This he is aiming at. He is going to advance you to great honour, and to make you comforted on every side. At this very time he is training you up for it. He is now going to confer some of his special mercies, some of the greatest blessings he has to give on earth: which he bestows in so certain and fixed a way, that I know his mind and will concerning you, as plainly here in London as if I was with you at —, and you were to tell me all your thoughts: for, indeed, our Jesus is very communicative. He keeps nothing from his friends—"And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" &c. Gen. xviii. 17, 18, &c. No: he is of my court, and I will make him of my cabinet: Abraham shall be my privy counsellor. And the same Lord has raised you and me to the same dignity. Thus our patent runs: "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends, therefore all things which I have

heard of my Father I have made known unto you." Our divine teacher still makes known to us what he doeth. He reveals his will, and lays open his heart. And according to what I have discovered of it, your second lesson is this. May he breathe upon it by his Spirit, and bless to your soul every line you read. O that all within you may say, from a feeling submission to his loving correction—Lord Jesus Christ, "not my will, but thine be done!"

"The second lesson of the cross—or the exercise of faith in suffering."

1. They that have their portion in this life prosper in the world, they increase in riches, they come into no misfortune like other folk, neither are they plagued like other men.

2. But whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

3. He dealeth with them as with sons, having chosen them all in the same election of grace, prepared for them the same inheritance, and decreed that they should go the same way to it.

4. He will not exempt one of them, no, not his only-begotten Son, who went to his crown carrying his cross; and whom the Father did foreknow, them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.

5. Of this he has graciously forewarned them, that they might not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try them, as though some strange thing had befallen them: he has also promised to be with them, when they walk through the fire, and they shall not be burnt, neither shall the flames kindle upon them. And,

6. When they come out of the furnace, they shall find many blessed fruits of righteousness, which could not have grown or been ripened by any other means.

7. Art thou, then, O my soul, expecting the cross as thy portion, prepared to take it up as the honourable badge of thy discipleship, and ready to carry it daily, following Jesus?

8. Canst thou take it up in faith? Is this the right frame of thy heart, "God is my God, my Father in Jesus. He loves me with an unchangeable love, which influences all his dealings with me, and especially his present dispensation; for,

9. He not only loves me with an everlasting love, but he is also now waiting to communicate it to me: my present cross is his way and means of bringing it to my heart, and of bestowing on me some of its richest blessings."

10. True, it is painful to the flesh; but the flesh fighteth always against the spirit, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; and therefore the cross must be laid and must be kept upon it, in order to weaken its power, and also to strengthen the new man day by day.

11. There is a *needs must* for the daily cross to keep down pride, and to bring every high thought of self into subjection to Christ Jesus, that we may be always learning of him to be meek and lowly.

12. Looking at the cross in this light, as the loving appointment of the Father's will, and as the means of improving faith in the Son's salvation, through the grace of the eternal Spirit, how dost thou, O my soul, find it when it comes?

13. How is it with thee when the cross is upon

thy back, and thou art carrying a heavy painful load after Jesus?

14. Dost thou see Him before thee, who went in the same way? and dost thou honour his promises, and rely upon his faithfulness to carry both thee and thy cross?

15. When thou art chastised, and sharply, canst thou kiss the rod, and bless the kind hand which takes such pains to purge out thy corruptions?

16. And when the smart continues from day to day, dost thou so far profit from it, as to be able to say from thy very heart, Father, thy will be done? Happy soul! for then thou art a partaker of his holiness.

17. When it is the will of the Father to spare the child, what profit has appeared, after he has removed the cross for a time?

18. Are there any peaceable fruits of righteousness growing or ripening in the heart? Is there more joy and peace in the Son's salvation, and more happy enjoyment of the Father's love?

19. Has the Holy Spirit deadened the life of sense, by putting the cross upon it, and thereby produced more liveliness to spiritual and to eternal things?

20. Say, is the harvest good and plentiful? Do the graces flourish? Have faith and patience been in exercise, and improved? Has resignation to the divine will been in practice, and the good of submitting to it learned by experience?

21. Thrice happy soul to whom the cross is thus sanctified! yet a very little while, and faith and patience having done their perfect work, the cross will be no more, but the crown will be for ever.

My very dear friend, this is my present lesson ; and though I am a dull scholar, yet I get on a little. I wish you may get before me ; for I am told the Master takes great pains with you ; and I believe it. I am very certain you must carry your cross all the way through this valley of Baca. And what can I wish you better than that you may find the rain filling the pools, and you may go from strength to strength ? When the Lord strikes at your comforts, (and mind, your cross grows out of your comforts,) O that your heart may then feel submission, whatever nature feels ! may all within you, guided and strengthened by grace, be able to say, Lord, take away what thou wilt, only take not away the light of thy loving countenance. When thou removest any of my comforts, let me not forget they were thine ; thy free gift, lent me by thy love, and kept long for me by thy bounty. And now thou art pleased to require them, Lord, make thy will mine, and fill up the place which they had in my heart with thy precious love. So be it, Lord Jesus. Amen.

W. R.

LETTER XXXI.

Nov. 13, 1770.

My very dear Friend,—Since last Thursday I have been in your service, heartily in it. I cannot charge myself with any neglect : and I went on more cheerfully, because I thought it was my dear Master's work, which made it pleasant. But when I heard the living was last night given to a Mr. —,

judge what a blow this was; I felt exceedingly for you. I thought of Mr. M——, and the poor people at K——, deprived of the greatest blessing short of heaven. O my friend! indeed I was grieved sore, and began to complain and murmur—"Why could not the Lord have given his people a pastor after his own heart? Would it not have been for his glory? Are there not many precious souls in and about K—— who will now want their daily bread?" Thus my heart was grieved; and it went even through my reins: so foolish was I, and ignorant. But I am recovered, and got into my right mind. Now I confess the Lord reigneth. He can make no mistake in his government. He does all things well, both for his own glory, and for his people's good. Mr. B——'s removal, a poor dead stick in his room, the joyful sound heard no more in K——, the mourners going about wringing their hands in the streets, &c. &c. &c., put as many more complaints as you please, yet every one of them shall be made to work together for good. He has said it, and shall he not do it? yes, he will do it; and you shall know it too. This very visitation shall be overruled to bring about many gracious purposes, perhaps such as these:—

First, A submission to his sovereign will, that you may say, All is well.

Secondly, Self-examination: was it not for my fault, my not valuing, not being thankful for, not improving the blessed gospel, that the Lord has removed our candlestick?

Thirdly, Living upon Jesus more. When the streams dry up, then people are forced to go to the

fountain-head : so the means failing, his people must live upon the Lord of all means.

Fourthly, Living more upon the word. If it cannot be heard, blessed be God, it may be read ; prize it, meditate on it, lay it near your heart. May it be as sweet as honey, and as precious as gold, yea, as much fine gold. One single sermon to a hungry soul will be as blessed as ten thousand to one who has no appetite.

Fifthly, Trust the Lord for making an opening for the gospel, even at K——, in his own way. You cannot see how ; why, then, that is the time to trust, pray, believe, wait. For,

Sixthly, If the Shepherd has any of his flock at K——, which I cannot doubt, then they cannot perish for lack of knowledge. He will either send the gospel to them, or them to it.

I own it is a trying time. If I was in your circumstances I should want all that can be said to make me think the Lord was doing right ; and therefore, my dear friend, I would lead you to some comfortable view of this matter. The blessed God enable you to give it up to him, and in patience to possess your soul ! If your private loss be very distressing, try to divert the grief, and look at the public loss. O what has the church suffered in the setting of that bright star which has shone so gloriously in our hemisphere ! Mr. Whitfield's preaching is over : now he is praising. We have none left to succeed him : none of his gifts, none any thing like him in usefulness. But the same glorious Jesus who gave him to us has taken him away. If he wants another such, he can make him out of a

stone. Well, then, let us submit; let him alone, let him alone. His interest at K——, his interest in England, is as dear to him as the apple of his eye. He is managing all for the best. May you and I bow the knee, and say, “Thy will be done.”

I have no more time but to follow this letter with my prayers, that the great Head of the church may teach you practically what I have been mentioning. And depend upon it, a day will come when you will see this was right. Only wait; blessed are they that wait for him. Farewell, my good friend, and believe me to be yours in that dearest, sweetest Jesus,

W. R.

LETTER XXXII.

Aug. 20, 1771.

MY dear Friend,—I have sent you three volumes of the second part of the “Walk of Faith,” with many prayers. I have prayed it over in writing; and I am daily begging the free Giver of every good and perfect gift that he would go out with it, and own it to the hearts of his dear people. My design in writing the book was for his glory and their good. The plan is simple. It was to show that Christian principles are sufficient for all the purposes of Christian practice; so that whenever we fail in practice, we have first failed in principle. How should it be otherwise, since the principles are mighty through God? The same grace which teaches them, as the truth of God, gives also the experience of them, as the power of God. If, therefore, peace rules in the

conscience, and love in the heart, the effect will follow, as light does when the sun is risen. There will be a dependence on the promised power of God to do and to suffer his will; and this power will as certainly be put forth as God is true; so long as peace and love are maintained. Try yourself. Observe narrowly how it is that you fail in practice; and you will always see your faith gave way, and you was not living up to your privileges. I know not how I have succeeded in describing this grand mistake in the Christian walk, or in rectifying it: but this I know well, that the salvation of Jesus is absolutely, infinitely, everlastingly perfect in every part, and at the very given moment, and the belief of it will produce an even, holy, happy walk; and if this belief was perfect, (as it should be,) an enjoyment of this salvation would be upon earth what it is in heaven. I pray God to carry you and me on from faith to faith, that we may daily bring greater honour to his word and to his work.

If any light, or love, or joy, warm your heart in reading, remember me. My trials are very great. I have the old burden very heavy indeed—a vast body of sin, under which I groan, and great bodily pain, hard to bear. I have been to the sea for relief; but my Lord thinks proper to refuse it. When I had other trials he spared me, and never let me know what bodily pain was: but now outward trials are in a great measure removed, this is my cross. He is merciful in all his dealings; blessings on him for his kind rod! You will find in the second volume a chapter on the outward cross, and another on the inward: they are the longest chapters, be-

cause I felt what I wrote, and because all God's children carry these two crosses to the grave. I beg your attention to the inward cross; and when you have read the chapter, be so good as to tell me how you like it. To manage it well is the greatest lesson in the school of Christ. O that he may teach you as you read, and be your prophet, to enable you to live upon him as your priest!

Many years ago I chose my motto—"Cease ye from man." You see how needful it is. Place your happiness on any thing but the heavenly Lover, it makes itself wings, and flies away. How many sweet hours (the remembrance is sweet) have I spent at K——! yearly visits, pleasing and profitable. But I am debarred this enjoyment. I must learn my motto in an instance of hard self-denial. Happy for you and for me if every such disappointment lead us nearer to God. I wish Mr. J—— may walk with us in our way, and all his sisters. I wish that little dear, dear boy, does not get some of Christ's place in your heart. God bless him, and make him a comfort to you! Write my motto upon his forehead, and remember it whenever you look at him. My love to Mr. I——m. May every blessing of the everlasting covenant be yours on earth and heaven! So prays yours in Jesus,

W. R.

LETTER XXXIII.

Feb. 1772.

My dear friend has been thinking—"Well, I could not have expected such neglect; a letter sent

in October, and not answered in January; I am surprised what can be the meaning of it!" I answer, to my shame, that I am grown very lazy, and good for nothing. It is high time I was dismissed from the vineyard; and any other master but mine would have had nothing to do with me long ago. I cannot but loathe myself, and stand wondering daily at his kindness. Never was self lower, and his loveliness higher, than in this new year. Worthless as I am, beyond all conception, yet he begun the year with vouchsafing me some delightful Pisgah-views. You must know it has been a custom with me for many years to have a sermon on the New Year's Day, and to have the text of a sort of watchword, something very short and striking, and which may serve the believers to feast upon a twelvemonth. I have found this very useful to myself, and so have others. Our text for 1772 was, "Christ is all." I send you some remarks, believing you will have fellowship with us in them, as you certainly have in that adorable person of whom they treat.

Christ has all the fulness of salvation in him, as God-man; and he has it to the glory of the Father, and of the eternal Spirit: for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, as in the head for the use of his members. And it pleased the Holy Spirit to testify of his fulness in the Scripture; and it pleases him by his grace to bring believers to use it, and to live upon it; and then they are truly converted. All other experience is not worth one farthing. The great work of the Holy Ghost is to pull down *self*, and to exalt *Christ*. This he does effectually, and this he has done in you. Think

what your debt is ; try to cast it up ; and send me the sum total. Say, how much do you owe to the Holy Spirit for enlightening your understanding, and convincing you that Christ is the one sun of the spiritual world. What a most blessed change has he wrought upon your mind ! He has stripped you of the knowledge that puffeth up : and has sent you to Christ, and to none but Christ, to be taught the things of God. He has brought you humbled to the Saviour's feet, where you are sitting among his lowest scholars (and that is the best place) to hear his words. Thus he has glorified your divine prophet in you ; and in the matter of teaching he has made Christ your all. The Bible, and ministers, and means, have now got their right place ; they are subservient to Christ's teaching. He is exalted by your use of them : for you do not go to them, but to him in them, to receive lesson upon lesson, and line upon line. Thus may you and I be found waiting upon our great Lord and Master through the year seventy-two. And when we thus put honour upon his office, and give glory to his teaching, we may expect to learn much of him : he will guide our feet in the way of peace ; he will enlarge our faculties to know more of the wonders of his grace ; and he will enable us to enjoy more of the heavenly sweetness of his precious love. Yes, Lord, we have great expectations from thee : thou canst teach us far more than we have yet learned. O make us every day humbler scholars, that, whatever we learn, the praise of it may be thine, and our growth in saving knowledge may add to thy fame and renown !

Methinks I hear you ask—"But how shall I

know for certain, that I am one of Christ's scholars, and that he has indeed taken me into his tuition and teaching?" My dear Madam, you are to know it from what you have learned of him. You cannot be certain of it any other way. He would have you to look at his revealed truth, and to try yourself by it. Has not he made you wise in it unto salvation? O do, pray do acknowledge what he has done for your soul. When you was sensible of your fallen state, in which you inherit a corrupt nature, and felt that in it you could do nothing but sin—when guilt was in your conscience, and fear was in your heart, what was it which brought you relief? To what did you look for pardon, and from whence did you expect peace with God? Your answer will show whether you are Christ's scholar, and how far you have advanced in his school.

I can make you reply (for I have heard you say as much)—“Why, to be sure, I have no hope but in that offering which perfecteth for ever, and in that righteousness which justifieth from all things. This is my salvation—this, and nothing else—“Christ is all,”—I expect no pardon but in his blood—no justification but in his obedience—no safety but in his keeping me—no happiness but in his love—no heaven but in the enjoyment of Emmanuel.”

Very well! this is a good confession. But who taught it you? Was it not Jesus, he who alone teacheth man saving knowledge? Has not he opened your eyes to see, and your heart to receive those most blessed truths? Yes, he has. And do you praise him as he deserves? O no. A thought often comes into your head, “If I had learned those

things of Christ, how could it be that I am so little and so seldom comforted by them? they are full of all consolation, and I am sometimes quite empty: how can this be?" I will tell you, my good friend. The very same thought comes into my head, and plagues me. But I get the better of it. Consider where it is written, *He that is comforted shall be saved!* You are called upon to trust the work of Christ, and to trust it for yourself upon the word of Christ. His work is your whole salvation; his word, and nothing in yourself. (Here I should stop. This is the end of my paper. But I cannot get done—you must let me finish my sentence, although it be to your cost.—Well, you will forgive me, I proceed.)—His word, and nothing in yourself, is to be your lawful warrant to call this salvation your own, and to use it for your own. Rest here, giving credit to the free promise of salvation to all that will receive it, and I will lay my life of it you will not want comfort long. You will have God's faithfulness for your security that you are a saved sinner; and the belief of this cannot but bring peace and joy into your heart. According to your faith, so will your comfort be. But if you rest not here, get comfort where you will, it will not be true; it cannot be lasting. Not *true*; because all comfort dwells in Christ; every thing else is emptiness and vanity—Not *lasting*; because frames, feelings, habits, graces, joys, &c. &c. ebb and flow. Only Christ abideth the same for ever, and only his unchangeable word can fix your comfort. Trust it; make it your constant warrant to go to Christ for comfort, and he cannot deny his word: according to your faith, so will *he give unto you.*

Do not think, my good friend, I would have you to walk mourning and melancholy. No. There is nothing in Christ to make you so. He is all light, and life, and love, and joy, and that without ceasing; an infinite and everlasting fulness of all blessings. I would lead you to him in the direct road, which is to lead you out of self entirely. Christ is the way—look more at him, and less at self; trust more to him, and less to your faith or comforts; live upon nothing in yourself, but live every moment upon him; do not eye his gifts so much—fix your heart upon the Giver; be always thinking of his fulness whenever you feel your own emptiness: whatever you are, or do, or suffer, let all things bring you to make—(forgive me, I must go on: I take up another half sheet, and I beseech you, again and again, let all things bring you to make)—use of Christ. Read about him. Go to your closet to converse with him. Go to church to meet him. Make him your companion. Accustom your mind to meditate upon him. Pray without ceasing to him as your bosom-friend. Do not be shy of him; he hates shyness. Draw near; he bids you come with boldness, vile, unthankful, unprofitable as you are: his dear heart is always open to hear your complaints, and to relieve your distresses, be they what they will. Remember, he is the Sun of *our* world, and you cannot be thus always in his presence, without being enlightened by his rays, and cherished with his warm beams. When any are very cold within doors, and see the sun shining sweetly, they do not use to ask, Is it *my* sun? May I go out to walk in this noon-day brightness, and get myself warm in this delight-

ful sunshine? Is it for me? Yes, make use of it who will, it shines for you; Christ is as freely yours as that sunshine. You may walk in his light, and enjoy his comforts. You may take him for your righteousness and your holiness; you may live on him for grace and glory. He is yours, and all he has is yours also, and for your use to-day and for ever.

Thus you see, my good friend, how we intend to live in London through the year 1772. "Christ is our all," not only in our title to salvation, but also in our present enjoyment of its blessings. We expect a great income, and all from Christ. Our faith in him is not an empty notion, (as the world thinks,) but it is a reality. Christ is the substance; all besides is shadow; and by faith we now take possession of the substance. We live by him, and we live on him. We need envy nobody. What are princes to us? our estate is vastly beyond theirs; the inheritance is sure; the riches unsearchable; and the income,—ask and have; and that increasing through eternity. O blessed, most blessed inheritance! The prospect is not like that of Moses. He only saw the country, but we go over Jordan. We, who have believed, do enter into rest. We are living in the land which floweth with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands. An heir of this country may live in the poorest cottage at K——, and yet be richer than a king. If he live this year, as he should do, by the faith of the Son of God, what are the riches of emperors compared to his? He can look into his title-deeds, and there read two clauses, which make him rich, even beyond

conception : "all things are yours,"—and yours for ever.

I know what you will think, as well as if I heard you tell me your thoughts. I am acquainted with the vile suggestions of the enemy. He may tempt you to doubt of these truths on account of your having still so many wants. But, my friend, the more the better. We should glory in our wants. They make us rich : for we can want nothing but it is in Christ's fulness, and laid up there for us. This makes way for a constant intercourse between you and Christ, and keeps up a holy friendship in giving and receiving. By this means a sweet familiarity will be maintained, and a growing intimacy cherished. Christ requires you would be free with him, and draw largely upon his bank. Every moment you want something : Christ says, "Here it is ; come to me for it. I can deny you nothing." O go to him at his bidding, and put honour upon his love. Your many, your great wants, will only give him an occasion to show how much he loveth you. He has for you bowels of the tenderest compassion. He feels for you more than you can think. Blessed is that want, look at it by faith and you will find it so, which brings you to Christ for a supply.

Do you want *temporals*—read my grant : "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat ? or, What shall we drink ? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed ? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek ;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things ;"—or *spirituals*, trust my promise : "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual

blessings in heavenly places in Christ ;"—or *eternals*, look at my gift : " The wages of sin is death ; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." And be assured I will withhold from you no manner of thing that is good. Stand upon this ground, and here survey your wants ; be they what they will, trust Christ for a supply. Live like a Christian, by the faith of the Son of God, for temporals, spirituals, and eternals : this is living. This is holy living ; for you cannot be thus receiving every moment out of Christ's fulness, but you must feel some gratitude to your divine friend, and a growing willingness to be his debtor for grace, and to be one of his pensioners for glory. This is high living ; for then has the Holy Spirit magnified Jesus in you upon earth, when you make him all and in all ; and then has he given you the certain earnest that he will bring you to heaven, where you will find Jesus all and in all, for ever and ever.

LETTER XXXIV.

Nov. 23, 1778.

My dear Friend,—As I have not been permitted to talk to you face to face this summer, why should not I converse with you in another way ? I think it right to tell you my present feelings, and how I stand affected towards you. I believe that all the true love in the world comes from the infinite fulness of Jesus. It has no other source : and he has (eternal blessings on him !) warmed my cold heart with some of his precious love. I feel a

ray of it drawing my affections to my dear friend. Its sweet influence is from above; its origin is divine; it is indeed of heavenly extraction and birth. No thanks to me that it partakes of some of the gracious properties of the Fountain from whence it springs: for some of them it has, my conscience bearing me witness. And these, I confess, are not natives of mine own soil; not being planted in it, am I able to make them grow and flourish? O no! The God of all grace is the free giver; he is the mighty continuer: without him they would have never been; without him they would have died at their birth, and gone out like a spark in the ocean. But I do really find some of the image and likeness of my loving Lord upon my heart, and that towards you. There can be no true friendship without a union of spirit. In order to be pure and steadfast, it must be refined from selfish views and carnal motives; it must spring from no outward attachment, but from a real agreement and harmony of soul: such is the nature of Christian friendship. It is beyond all Plato's rules and Seneca's morals. They had no idea of it. Reason the most refined could never understand our doctrine. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit; a most wonderful union, big with blessings temporal and eternal. Among its temporal blessings, it is not the least that he reforms the heart, and makes it loving like his own; capable of receiving his heavenly friendship, and capable of showing it to his praise by especial love to his brethren and our brethren.

In whatever view I am considering our divine Friend, there is always something which gives him, and most justly, the pre-eminence. He is, and will

be for ever, the most blessed Head, which communicates life, and breath, and all things, to every member. In the character now before us, O how exalted, how glorious is he ! Yes, he is beyond all blessing and praise, for being a present Saviour to his people ; as he mightily delivers them from the tyranny of their vile tempers, and renders them happy in one another. It is from his grace that they put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, &c. He plants those virtues in the heart ; he waters them with the rain of heaven ; he shines upon them ; and he makes them flourish in spite of all the opposition of selfish passions and inbred lusts ; indeed he does. There are persons in the world who are infinitely indebted to Jesus Christ for that brotherly love which is the bond of perfectness, and who, in some measure, walk in love, according to his teaching. But they mourn, I know they do, because they find so little gratitude to him, and so little conformity to his example. Yet some likeness there is, and they are striving every day for more, still setting out afresh : not content with any past attainment, they study both to love him more, and to draw more virtue from him, that they may love others, as Christ also loved them.

methinks I see one of his disciples warm and eager in this pursuit. I stop him, and ask, “ Sir, upon what principle is it that your heart is so set upon being like Christ ? You are quite unwearied in having your own hateful tempers subdued, and in putting on the sweet dispositions of the meek and lowly Jesus.”

His answer, I am sure, would be—"The love of Christ constraineth me: O how I feel the blessed effect of being one with my Lord! He has taught me in my very heart to love God, and man for God's sake: to this dearest Jesus I am indebted for my paradise restored; and I am never happier than when I am sensible of my vast debt; for then I love him best, and am most enabled to manifest it to men. Beyond description, beyond conception of any, yea, all the glorified saints, is the love of Emmanuel to my soul: it is like himself, infinite and boundless; it is quite free, given to the unworthiest, and to the most unthankful: a perfect love, nothing but love, such as excludes all shyness and coldness, prevents misconstructions and quarrels, yea, removes the very cause and ground of them: a communicative love, most generously bestowing a right and title to all blessings upon the beloved; for thus the grant of the great charter runs—"All mine are thine:" and, to crown the whole, it is a lasting love; yea, everlasting, reaching from eternity to eternity. The more I study and experience of this heavenly love, the more I find my heart affected with it, and the more I wish that all my friendships may reflect some image of, and bring some glory to, the friendship of my Jesus."

Having read this passage over carefully, I can, if called upon, set my hand and seal to it. All this I know to be true.—*W. R.* Some little spark of this holy flame (but, though little, inestimable) has long ago thawed my frozen heart, and has kept a warmth of affection in it which he that kindled often hears of in prayer and praise for you, and of which they who

know you, and come in my way, hear also. Some kind providence will, I doubt not, ere long, let you hear it with your own ears. With pleasing hope I look forward to a present, because I am sure of a future meeting, which will never end. Our friendship will run coeval with our being: it is a union formed by the divine hand of Jesus, who has won our hearts, and made them one in himself, in a bond which he will not, and none else can break: so that we may sing, in humble confidence, all our way to Sion,

The love divine
That made us thine,
Shall keep us thine for ever.

LETTER XXXV.

GRACE and peace be abundantly multiplied to my dear friend from the Lord Christ; may all whom she loves partake of his love! I have been kept from writing to you, and acknowledging your many favours to me and to mine, by my Master's business. As soon as I came home, I was invited to preach in Buckinghamshire, where we have had the Lord with us of a truth. O what am I, that mine eyes should see such things as I see! I, who am the veriest filthy dunghill-sinner, that ever God suffered to live; that I, even I, should partake of his grace, as well as preach it: O it is astonishing! Surely, if ever I get to heaven (and I must not doubt of getting thither) I shall beat Mary Magdalene, and Paul, and Peter, and Manasseh, all to nothing. They had not half to pardon that I have; and yet,

glory, glory, glory be to Jesus, I am among his pardoned ones. Who, then, shall sing his praises in such a high note as I can? None, no, not one of them all. I am the most indebted to free grace of all that ever were saved out of hell. May my experience tend to the strengthening of your faith!

Dear Madam, you almost overcome me with kindness. I shall be afraid to call and see you, lest you make me proud: for what have I good in me? Nothing. What good do I? None at all. Whatever good is in man, whatever good is done upon earth, the Lord doeth it himself. Down, then, with man: lay low his lofty looks, and up with Christ. Exalt him; too high we cannot raise him, too low we cannot humble the sinner. I would have you, therefore, not to look at me, but at my precious, dear Master. Look unto him, and you shall be saved. Look unto me for any thing, and you shall infallibly be disappointed.

Present my hearty love in the bowels of Christ Jesus to your sister W——r. I find great fellowship with her as a member of the same body, and actuated by the same spirit: and tell her from me, that she cannot make too much use of Christ. The more she uses him in all things, the happier will she be. To this I can set my seal *probatum est*.

I fail not to remember Mr. M——, when I am near, and have freedom with my precious Master. May you never want his presence! My wife joins in thanks, and is, with me, yours in the Lord Jesus,

W. R.

LETTER XXXVI.

Oct. 28, 1775.

My good Friend,—Having an opportunity of sending my hearty love to you by Mr. I——n, I could not avoid embracing it. You are often on my mind, and in my prayers. Really, my dear Madam, you are one of them by whom I find the truth of what I believe concerning the communion of saints. I experience it in its comfort; for I feel with you, rejoicing in your joys, and taking part in your sorrows. I have a good account of your health, a great blessing; may it continue! and of your spiritual health, which is a greater; may that increase! and it will, as you live more in, on, and to Christ Jesus; coming daily as a poor sinner to live on a rich Saviour. This is the great secret of the gospel. Nothing should keep you from Christ. However you feel, whatever you have done, at all times, in all places and frames, go to Jesus. I have been at this lesson a great while, and though very dull and stupid, yet through marvellous grace I have learned something. When things go well, we are apt to rest in them: I do not; my Jesus makes them well; I thank him, and rest in him, and not in his gifts: I enjoy him in them: and when things go badly, inward or outward, I would not stay from him to complain or murmur one moment, but rejecting myself entirely, take him for my whole complete happiness. Let things go as they will, I look at Jesus through them, and would make use of them to lead me to live

more upon him. This seems easy; but try it. I wish you a better scholar at it than I am. I hear you had a warning to be ready at the next door. I pray for its good effect. When the messenger comes, may every M—— lift up his and her head with joy!

I grow old, and find marks of the tabernacle's wearing out fast; but I know in whom I have believed. To him I commend you and yours. W. R.

LETTER XXXVII.

August 2, 1779.

My dear Friend,—We remembered you and yours very particularly on the 7th of May last. Blessings on the birth of that day! I know more about it in 79 than I did before; and more reason to honour and esteem you. I send you enclosed a little token of respect. You had it in the last war, and it is now again expedient, yea, necessary. I hope for your helping hand in this good work. Some must fight, and others pray. One is as much wanted as the other. If Moses does not pray, Joshua does not conquer. Prayers gained the victory. Asa has a great army of one million, one hundred thousand good soldiers; but he does not trust so much to them, nor conquer so much by them, as by his prayers. Jehoshaphat's prayer of faith vanquished a vast host without fighting. Read 1 Chron. v. from the 18th to the 23d verse. On this account I beg of you, my dear friend, to join us. You have some praying people at K——:

call upon them to unite on this occasion. Remember, "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." To-day it will avail as much as it did in the time of Elias. May God give you the spirit of prayer, that you may join the goodly company throughout the land, who will be on their knees next Sunday at eight o'clock. It is your duty. May you esteem it your privilege! and I wish you growing communion with your God; more delight daily in approaching the throne of his grace, and more blessings coming from him on you and yours. We have already many hands lifted up to engage the Lord of Hosts on our side. Mine are engaged, and I trust will not hang down till peace return.

W. R.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Blackfriars, Nov. 30, 1779.

My good Friend,—I have been taught to weep with them that weep. They cannot but feel with and for one another who are joined to the Lord in one Spirit. That you suffer seems grievous to the flesh. I sympathize with you; but I also find the Lord is with you, supports you, yea, he comforts you: therein I do rejoice. My prayer is for much patience under his hand, and much profit from his rod. Let me direct your attention to Heb. xii. from the 5th verse to the 14th. The whole matter turns upon the character of the Person who afflicts. Is it in wrath, or in love? Does he punish as a Judge, or correct as a Father? Mind how the sen-

tence begins—*my son* ; keep this upon your heart ; you have fled to Jesus, you have taken the benefit of his atonement and of his righteousness ; you are therefore the adopted child of the most high God. And you must not think he changes his love when he changes his dispensations. He is always your Father ; and say, his rod is for the present not joyous, but grievous ; yet mind, ver. 11. it only seemeth : the flesh seems to be hurt, but really it is not ; it is only in appearance : look nearer ; you may easily see love sending, love inflicting ; and wait a little, you will have reason to thank your Father for the blessed fruits of his love. If you live you will find them very rich and ripe. If he spare life, my first journey shall be to K——. I have great fellowship with the afflicted. I shall hope and pray for your support and comforts ; my God has promised both. May they be abundant ! This summer has given me great occasion to learn the same lesson with you ; and I can set to my seal that God is good, and doeth good, nothing but good, to his children : to his tender care I commend you and yours. Look above, live above, both your joys and sorrows ; make Jesus, at least you wish to make Jesus, your ALL. I shall be thankful for a line when convenient, to tell me more of his dealings with you ; and am, in him, your faithful dear friend and servant, W. R.

LETTER XXXIX.

Saturday, March 29.

MY good Friend,—I have an opportunity of sending my respects to you by Mr. I——n; but I choose to give them to you under mine own hand. Although I do not see you, yet you have a place in my heart, and in and for the Lord's sake, who changeth not. I remember K—— in my best times, you and yours. One proof of it I hope to give this summer, if I am spared. Age is coming on fast; infirmities many and great; travelling is a burden. But before I go hence, I purpose once more to visit my Y——re friends; I feel towards them some of that grace mentioned, Rom. i. 11, 12. which grows by giving and receiving; as, indeed, all the gifts of Christ do: the more you use, the more you have: you become richer for what you lay out. Such a wonderful fulness flows from Christ, that he who spends most for him, gets most from him. O that my journey may be of this kind; to your profit and mine, and to Christ's glory. I know not what time it will be; but will not wait on you without first acquainting you, and knowing what time will be to you the most agreeable.

Your dear boy is often on my mind. I am sure you do not wish him better than I do. All my advice is turned into prayer. You will give my love to Mr. B——y, of whom I hear good things. Mrs. R. desires her kind love to you and family. We had yesterday such a solemn time as I never

expected to see in London. It was very truly a good Friday. My hopes revive for this guilty land; for them that honour me, says God, I will honour: I am sure he was honoured yesterday. Let me, my good friend, not in compliment I ask, be remembered by you in prayer. My time is short. Pray that I may be kept humble and thankful. I am, with true Christian affection, in and for my dear Lord's sake, your friend and servant, W. R.

LETTER XL.

Nov. 16, 1780.

MY dear Friend,—Wave after wave, trouble after trouble—no ceasing till we get into the haven. I do not wish you out of them, but to profit by them. The furnace is to refine gold; so faith, proved, improved, yea, perfected by trials. Mind what the great Refiner says—"I will bring the third part through the fire, and I will refine them as silver is refined, and I will try them as gold is tried. They shall call on my name, and I will hear them. I will say, It is my people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God." O blessed furnace!—What! is this the effect of being put into it? Does the Son of God appear for and with his suffering members?—Does he keep off the evil of suffering—give patience under it, profit from it—deaden the life of sense—quicken the life of faith—and thus bring more real good to his people from their trials than from all the comforts that ever they had? Say—It is great, an uncommon great trial: the furnace is heated seven

times more than it was wont to be heated. Still, this is not to destroy faith, but to refine and exalt it. The plain lesson from hence to be learned is, we must now trust more to the Lord, and less to self. His strength must be our safety, and not our weakness. His blessings must be our happiness. I write these things, because I am praying for them. It is not so much advice as prayer. I know my Lord can, I believe my Lord will, help you in this time of need. Whatever interest I have with him is yours. None feel for you, or can, more than I do.

I am thankful, however, for the grace of God given unto you at this trying time. The furnace is intended, in the Father's hand, to prove faith, and to improve it. He puts it into the fire like gold, that, upon trial, it may appear sterling; and that, losing nothing but dross, we may learn to trust him better. You now see and know that his trials of faith are acts of love. The burning bush, so far from being consumed in the flames, is cherished by them, and grows. Blessed be the name of our God! I find the miracle repeated in our visitations. In faith and patience you possess your soul; yea, the smell of fire does not pass upon you. Where could you have learned what God has been teaching you so soon, or so well? All is well. May you see more of his love in every dispensation! Trust him. Go on trusting, without doubt or wavering, and he will grant you your heart's desire. I commend myself very earnestly to your remembrance in the best place. Mention me to your divine and almighty Friend, in whom I am, with my very best wishes, your obliged servant,

W. R.

LETTER XLI.

May 16, 1782.

My very dear Friend,—I could not neglect this opportunity of assuring you how much I remember you in the best place. Our Lord knows the *needs must* of suffering. He loves you too well to deprive you of your portion. He himself went, and all his go, the same way to glory. They drink of the brook in the way; and they drink it out of the cup of salvation. True, it is bitter. I find it very bitter; as unpalatable as you can find it. But I am praying it may prove more salutary to you and to me: and this it cannot do while we murmur and complain. It is sent to stop this working of self-will. The flesh is impatient, and frets; the Spirit stops its rebellion, and says—Not my will, Lord, but thine be done. Amen! May this be the end of all your trials! May you come out of them like gold out of the fire!

I hear you have a present exercise; namely, your young and beloved Isaac to be parted from you. There is grace sufficient even for this. You do not love your son more than I did mine. It cannot cross your will more than it did mine: but my son went into the army, and I do not repent; it was his choice. He has been kept, as far as I know, from army sins: and the same good God may also keep your son. Trust him in his loving and careful guidance; and the Lord will do what is best both for him and for you.

—— Your one business is to trust your all in the hands of Christ; having received him, then to live upon him. Remember, he is to answer every purpose, body and soul; you and yours; earth and heaven. You are not living up to your privilege, if there be any person or thing that you keep back from Christ, and do not leave to his absolute management. The command runs—"Trust in him at all times, ye people." Pray him to make you willing to part with your son, as he did Abraham. Pray him to give you more faith to trust him in the Lord's hand: and then follow him with your daily prayers that the good Lord may keep him from all evil. When you have done this, the rest must be left. The Lord will do what seemeth him good: yea, he will enable you to say, Come what may, all is well.

In a bond never to be broken, I am yours in Christ. My blessing on your dear son, and prayers for him!

W. R

LETTERS
TO
ONE OF HIS SISTERS.

LETTER I.

My dear Sister,—I always loved you as my sister, now I love you much more than ever. I trust in God you will soon stand related to me, by a more close and dearer bond than nature can tie. Only go on, and you will be happy. God has begun his work, let him finish it. All my prayers shall be offered for your speedy experience of his pardoning love; and, until you taste of it, let me entreat you to be earnest in the careful use of all the means of grace: be much in prayer, in reading, and meditating on the word of God; but then take care that you build not on these duties. You are not to fancy, that any thing you can do, is able to justify you in the sight of God. Your justification is a free act of God's grace without works. W. R.

LETTER II.

My dear Sister,—I saw Mr. R. last Sunday, who gave me a very pleasing account of your growth

in grace. It was said formerly, that the distinguishing love of God chose two of a city, and one of a family; but now what reason have we to magnify and exalt the love of our God, who has been so exceedingly gracious to our family? I trust, he has greater blessings for us all, even in this life, than we have yet received. Only do you wait upon him, and be found in those ways wherein he meets his people, and he will carry you on safely and sweetly to the end of your journey: it is but a little way, and a short time, and we shall be at home; so that we ought every moment to be pressing forward; and may God keep you from being weary or faint in your mind! You have afflictions and troubles in the way, and so have all God's children. You have them, because you want them. You could not grow in grace without them. How could you take up your cross, and deny yourself daily, if you had not daily troubles? And it is the exercise of faith to bear them, and to believe that God deals them out by number, weight and measure. You have not one pain more than you stand in need of. And farther, "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." If we do but attain to this glory, it signifies very little by what way we come to the attainment of it. Think on these things, and, through the blessing of God, they may help to make you see and feel, that the way of suffering is the royal way to the kingdom.

My tenderest duty waits upon my dear mother. I hope God will finish his work in her, before she goes hence. I trust we shall meet once more in this world; and I doubt not but we shall meet, when

we shall part no more. I send enclosed, a little piece of Mr. Mason's. I hope God will bless it at this time, as it comes seasonably, and particularly to my sister M. who will, I expect, be able to read it with profit, about the time it reaches you.

Why do you want so much to have texts and pieces of sermons! Have you not the Bible? One word of it is worth a volume. Read and pray much; and God will do more for you than all his ministers can.

I commend you to God, and to the riches of his grace, praying him to do for you all exceeding abundantly above all that you can ask or think. I remain,
your loving brother, W. R.

LETTER III.

My dear Sister,—I have been very poorly a long time, but thank God, I find sickness better for me than health; and I am sure, when the Lord sees best, I shall be restored to my former state. The main thing is to be secure of our eternal health; of that I have no doubt. Blessed be God for his unspeakable gift. I believe not one tittle of the word can be broken, but that to the uttermost it shall be fulfilled even to me. This gives a relish to every thing God sends; because, whatever comes from him, comes always sanctified, and generally sweetened. What the enemy attempts against our peace, God over-rules to the establishing of it; and his temptations against our graces are made to strengthen them. This is my experience; I hope it is yours.

Rejoice in having an Almighty friend. Be comforted in him. What signifies all that Satan or the world, or our own hearts, can do against his power? We are his. That is enough. He will keep us. He will strengthen us. He will justify us. He will sanctify and glorify us. Yea, he will do this for such as we are. Oh let us then fear nothing but displeasing him; and while this holy fear is in our hearts, we shall go on safely and sweetly homewards. There may we meet, even in our Father's kingdom, and inherit all that Jesus purchased for us!

My best respects, and duty, and prayers, attend my dear mother. I have not the least uneasy thought about her. She has God's promise. This she shall find. The Lord keep you and all friends. W. R.

LETTER IV.

DEAR Sister,—Your letter gave me greater joy than I can express. I hope all will soon be well with your soul. You may examine yourself by these following rules, and I hope God will give his blessing to them.

First, Look back and see from whence your conviction of sin arose. The scripture says, true conviction must come from the holy Spirit; and when he is come, says Christ, he will convince the world of sin. It is his business, and his office; and when he acts in it, conviction has these properties different from the conviction of natural conscience. It respects not so much acts of sin, as the sin of our

nature; that entire pollution, and depravity of the faculties of soul and body, which render us by nature children of wrath. Again, it is deep; it goes to the bottom of the heart, and lays open all the lurking places of sin. Farther, it is lasting, it continues its hatred and opposition to all sin, until it be not only seen in the heart, but also driven out of it.

Secondly, If, after examining your conviction by these rules, you find it right, and peace and joy begin to arise in your conscience; if it be the peace and joy of the holy Spirit, it will make you continue to hate sin, and every thing sinful. It will leave you more in love with God than it found you. You will love prayer more, and will have a freedom and liberty in it, which you had not before. You will love God's word more, and will understand more of it, being enabled, by his grace, to find instruction in it, suitable to all your spiritual wants. My meaning in all this is, if the convictions have brought you to Jesus Christ, you will know it by its fruits. You will find yourself grow in grace, and more in earnest about the salvation of your soul.

Thirdly, Examine your growth in grace by this rule. We remember the sin which did so easily beset us; look at that; see whether you hate it entirely, and whether you have entirely got the mastery over it. God has promised that you shall have grace to help in time of need. Apply to God for the fulfilling of this promise; and be more concerned about this grace, which you always want in time of need, than about sensible comforts; because, in the one you may be deceived, but in the other you cannot. My dear sister, you have chosen the better

part. The kingdom of heaven is worth millions of worlds. May God enable you to seek, until you attain it. My prayers attend you.—Remember me to my sister.—My duty to my dear mother. Adieu.
W. R.

LETTER V.

GRACE be with you, my dear sister, and with my dearest mother; thanks for your kind letter. I am glad to observe the spirit of it. While Christ is dear and precious, all will be well. Lay him as the foundation, and build all upon him; then foundation and building will never, never fall. O my dear sister, you cannot make too much of him. Faith, resting on him, finds a free, full eternal pardon for all sin; and faith living upon him, finds power over sin, deliverance from temptations and enemies; and by and by, sin shall be no more, but only heaven and glory, the purchase of the Saviour's blood. The believers motto is, "Christ all, I nothing." For he cannot live upon Christ, unless he feel his want of him. More wants, more faith. As they increase, so must faith, that the believer may get a supply, and the Saviour may get the glory. May that precious Saviour, eternally, infinitely precious, be your keeper! May you love him more than I do; live more upon him than I! May my dear mother get established in him! Jesus keep you! Jesus bless you! My dear sister, yours in him, W. R.

LETTER VI.

My dear Sister,—You tell me good news indeed; which makes my heart glad and thankful. O what reason have I to bless the good and gracious Lord, who is still infinitely loving to me and mine! He hath brought me once more to St. Dunstan's, and through many miracles of mercy which I have experienced both in my body and soul for these last six months. Now I can sit down, and, looking back, adore and bless his rich grace; in all things, and for all things, I can give him thanks. Nothing have I to mention all the day long, but mercy upon mercy; great measure, pressed down, and running over. Every moment brings some increase of mercies to body, or soul, or children, or friends, or substance; and leads me to magnify the goodness of my dearest Lord. He hath showed himself, by numberless acts of grace, so entirely my friend, that he has enabled me to trust all my mercies in his hands. He knows what is best for me; and I am sure he will give it me. Thus he is glorified, and I am happy. You have heard of my being a candidate for a church in the city. My friends put me up; and I am as if I were not a candidate, for I have scarce a thought about it. One wish I am sure I have not, but that Christ's will may be done. Would he employ me in a larger field than I have at present, "here am I, Lord, send me." If he would have me to stay, and work where I am, I am content. Be thou, Lord, but with me, then I shall be and do what thou pleas-

est. Thus have I cast all my care for this and all other things upon the Lord, knowing that he careth for me. You will suppose then that I am happy; and so I am, very, very happy. I have got the pearl; let them take the field that will. For one end and purpose only do I now live. I see in this pearl of great price, the infinitely rich Jesus, far more wisdom, righteousness, holiness, strength, and blessedness, than I have yet attained; and I hunger and thirst for more, still more. I know it is all mine; and therefore I keep pressing forward. In what method and on what motives I do this, I will tell you:—

1. As to myself—I find that to this moment I never go to Christ for any thing until I feel the want of it; so that the more wants I have, the more I make use of him: for which reason I am not afraid to discover what is in myself, be it what it will, because it does not drive me from Christ, but leads me to him. By this means self is kept down, and Christ is exalted. For,

2. As to Christ—I grow in the knowledge of him, by finding every day more, that without him I can do nothing. Hereby my faith is increased, and I live in a more settled dependence upon him. My hopes are enlarged, and laid up with him within the vail, which is the death of worldly hopes and fears: and my love to him abounds from daily experience of his rich love to my soul, which crucifies and kills the creature love.

For these two things I am pressing forward, desiring to be more emptied of self, and to live more out of self, that I may be filled more with Christ,

and live more upon his fulness: and this I am sure is the way to be holy and happy. Now, at Christmas, I would wish to feel in myself what a lost and eternally miserable creature I should have been without Christ. Here lies the ground of dependence on him, and thankfulness to him. That believer will spend the best Christmas, who is most experimentally acquainted with his own ruined nature, and thereby knows what a mercy it is that God should take our nature, to save us from all the sins and miseries of it; and, being thus saved, what will he be doing all the Christmas, but praising and blessing that dear Jesus, to whom he is infinitely, and will be eternally indebted? May nothing but praise come from your lips, and mine, and my dear mother's. May she know that Jesus was born for her, and be glad now in his salvation.—I am yours in everlasting bonds,
W. R.

LETTER VII.

Lambeth, Sept. 29, 1764.

My dear sister must not accuse me of neglect. I have been about my Master's business, preaching at Bradford, at Powsey, &c.; and being now returned to London to preach three times to-morrow, I could not help giving you an account of my matters, and of my dear Jesus' great goodness to me. He has travelled with me, and been with me of a truth. O what have I experienced of his love since I left you! He has not only let me taste that he is precious, but he has made me also live upon his grace. He lets

me have nothing but love, free, rich love; and my very physic is given by and tastes of his love, and always works greater love in me to him: so that Jesus is become exceeding dear to me. His cross endears him, as well as his crown. Indeed, his cross is full of diamonds within, as his daughter (that is, every true believer) is all glorious within. But why do I speak thus to you? Is not that precious Emmanuel lovely in your eyes? Yes, I know he is; and I speak of him to you, to encourage you still to go on, expecting to receive every day of his fulness more than you received yesterday. Do not stop, do not think you have attained all he has to give; but keep pressing on: still there is more wisdom, you know but in part; still more growth in knowledge of Christ's righteousness—it is infinite and everlasting; still more holiness in Jesus' fulness than any one living has yet received, because not one on earth loves as they do in heaven; still more strength, because every day is to bring us more sensible of our weakness, that we may be strengthened more by him, and that his strength may be perfected in our weakness. The Lord give you his mind and Spirit, that you may be growing up into him in all things. You have great reason to bless the Lord Christ for his goodness to you in the north; but he has a dear people, and a numerous one too, in the west, and growing. It will be a vast multitude when they all get together; and that puts me in mind of my dear mother, who, I am sure, will not be wanting when the Lord counteth his jewels.—I am, for his sake, yours most affectionately, W. R.

LETTER VIII.

Lambeth, Nov. 6, 1765.

My dear Sister, whom I love in the Lord, peace be with you. Although I have nothing particular to communicate, yet I could not help writing on the old subject, which will never be exhausted.

While there are angels to sing, and saints to shout aloud for joy, they will be telling of the love of Jesus to all ages. How great is his goodness ! how great is his beauty ! Matchless both, as I can witness for one. I am loaded with his benefits. If I should begin to number them, they are more than I am able to express. To my body, my substance, my children, my soul, all, all is mercy ; and mercy too that endureth for ever. May the God of all mercy secure to himself, from me, all the glory that is his due. You ask about Blackfriars ; the cause stands still : it was to have been heard the first day of this term, but the lawyers were not ready. They begged for more time, and my Lord Chancellor granted it to them. When it will come on now I cannot tell. But I can tell much of Jesus' goodness to me. He does not let all this waiting time be lost. He is teaching me to make up all my happiness in himself, and is kindly cutting off one and another view of rest short of him, who is our only rest. And because I am a very dull scholar, and the Master is meek and lowly, he therefore bears with me, and takes a great deal of pains to instruct me in my lesson. I think this is one great end and aim in all his dealings with his dear

people. He would have them to trust him, to live on him, and to love him always. But how can he do this so effectually, as by bringing them off from trusting to, living on, and loving other things? He would take these out of the heart, in order to make room for himself. He is a jealous God. He will not sit on the same throne with idols. If there be one still in the heart, it must come down.

The more we cleave to it, he will put forth the more of his strength to divorce us from it. While he is in much mercy doing this, the foolish heart thinks Christ is hurting it, and intending it evil, when he means nothing but good, and is taking the best means to bestow good. He is removing the shadow, to make way for the substance. He is deadening the soul to sensual enjoyments, that it may be thereby more alive to God, and fitter for closer communion with him. Graciously is he teaching me these blessed lessons. What he takes from me, I gain most by. For I am an immense, yea, an eternal gainer, when he fills up with himself the want of that which he takes away. Whatever brings me this blessing, I can welcome it. Welcome the loss of Blackfriars. Welcome every cross which brings me nearer to my Jesus, and makes me live in stricter fellowship with him; and then I can say, and feel it too, farewell fine world, farewell all thy fine things, farewell for ever! when they would keep me one moment from the enjoyment of my greatest good, and from the love of my best and eternal friend, my Jesus. I have not one uneasy thought about my mother. I have seen the Lord's love to her, and I know he changeth not; what he hath begun

he will carry on. I can only pray she may be as much satisfied in her own heart as I am about her. Sweet Jesus bless you in body, and soul, and substance. Give me an interest in your prayers, who am your most affectionate brother, W. R.


LETTER IX.

Brighthelmstone, Oct. 8, 1765.

MY dear Sister,—I have been waiting for an opportunity to write unto you, and it is now come. You love to hear, and I love to write, about our common friend, that matchless loving lovely Jesus, a subject one is never tired of; the more we dwell on it, the sweeter it grows; the longer we enjoy its sweetness, the more of heaven will come down to us, till we get up into heaven itself. To see Jesus in heaven, and to enjoy him is the bless of heaven. Thanks be to him, he is the joy of your heart and mine. Although we do know him, and rejoice in him, yet we know but little of what is to be known; for he is an infinite subject, and we can but know him in part—but let us press on to know more. And, as we grow more humble and teachable, he will show us more of the excellency of his knowledge. Pray earnestly for more deep heart-humility. Mind—what he hideth from the worldly wise, he revealeth unto babes, unto them who are childlike, and simple. The Lord make us more so daily, that we may know him aright; and then we shall always see our salvation from sin, and hell, and our title to heaven and glory, in him. We cannot know him truly

without believing in him. When we understand his power, God-man—his errand into the world, to save sinners, his Almighty arm, and the love of his bleeding heart to save them; and what an innumerable company he has plucked out of hell's mouth, and raised up to his heaven; the more we know of these things, the more we can trust him. He says to all sinners, "Come to me, and I will save you." O what grace is in these lips—that you and I have heard his voice, and have come, and are saved. We do believe, Lord, increase our faith! let us pray much for it; because, as our faith in him increases, so will our love to him. I cannot believe he has finished salvation's work for me, and daily experience miracles of his love, without loving him in return; and as his miracles increase, I would love him more and more. O for more love to this best and dearest of friends! I am sure your heart says, Amen. Now the way to have his love both growing and increasing, so as to abound in us, is to be continually making use of him. He has all good in him; and he has it for you and me. He has the fulness in him of a fountain, to communicate of it. Of this fulness he would have us to make free; he invites us, commands us, to come with strong faith, and much love, that, by receiving from him great grace, he may get much glory from us, while we get much happiness from him.—His generous offer is, "Come with boldness—all I have is for you." Faith replies, "Lo! I come, sweet Jesus, at thy bidding, every moment, for every thing, for grace and glory: I am content to receive all at thy hands, and to be indebted to thee for all, and that for ever and ever."—While

you live thus, my dear sister, in constant fellowship with your Saviour, he will give you continual reason to love him, and to bless him. He will so treat you, so comfort you, so strengthen you, will make you in him, so holy and so happy, that every day he will enable you to trust him more, and to love him better. Thus you will come to enjoy more of him, you will delight more in his company, you will get greater intimacy with him, and will walk in close communion with him, which is heaven upon earth. This growing fellowship with him will increase the joys of your present salvation. So that, when doubt of his love, sense of indwelling sin, earth or hell, would tempt you from Jesus, he will speak in his word, and will speak to your heart, by his Spirit—"I am thine, fear not. I will guide thee with my counsel, and, after that, will receive thee into glory." You will believe steadfastly what he says, and will thereby resist and overcome the temptation. He will keep you; and you shall hold out unto the end, and shall know it too, and praise him for persevering grace. He will bless you in death; and the happiest time you ever knew will be, when he lays your body in a sweet sleep, and your spirit, with open face, shall see Jesus in the highest glory. To be with him for ever is the highest bliss. To this, I trust, he will bring you and me, that we may praise the riches of his grace, and get more in his debt for ever and ever. He is now teaching us this heavenly employment.—You can, and I can, take the crown of all our graces, and throw it at his feet.—Soon, very soon, we shall do the same with the crown of glory. O what a thought is that!—The good Lord is preparing my



mother to do the same. I heartily pray for her establishment in the faith, and am, with my wife's duty and love, your faithful friend, and affectionate brother, in our precious, most precious, eternally precious, Jesus,

W. R.

LETTER X.

Lambeth, March 3, 1764.

GRACE and peace be with my dear sister, and with my mother. I thank you for your note by the penny post. Our God is good: Oh, he is good indeed to us. Not a family perhaps in England so blessed of the Lord as we are. Why us, why us! Grace, grace has done it. Grace, grace must have the praise for ever. The time is at hand. The Lord hath spoken, "They that wait upon me shall never be ashamed." My mother is waiting. She trusts the Lord, but has not the comfort of believing. She shall not be ashamed. God will appear for her, and she shall rejoice in his salvation. I believe it, as much as if I now heard her in the triumph of faith. My little book is almost printed off. Please to send me word how to send them, and what number. My dear sister pray for it. Let it be a book of many prayers. Beg it may be a means of increasing faith in the hearts of all that shall read it.

I have got more preferment, God be thanked I am turned out of my little chapel. Rejoice with me, that I am counted worthy to suffer shame for his dear, dear, dearest of all names, Jesus. I do love him more for this mark of his love. 'Tis worth

more than a thousand a-year. I find to lose for Christ is vast gain. Who would not part with farthings for guineas? Oh I cannot tell you, words fail, how he has made up this loss to me, and how he has won my very heart by it, and endeared himself beyond measure to me. Let me entreat you to press on. Look at nothing but the way of duty. Go on in that, and there, by faith, all things will work together for your good. Believe me, it is so. I find he makes all things, what the flesh hates most, do good. Fear nothing then but sin. And let the world rail, persecute, it matters not. You are safe in Jesus' love, and happy. I am rich. My heart too is open. I desire nobody may want, while my purse is full. My wife is well, and the children. We join in duty to my dear mother, and in love to yourself. I am, in the closest bonds of brotherly love, yours, for that dear Lamb's sake, W. R.

LETTER XI.

1765.

My dear Sister,—Having two or three minutes to spare, I could not avoid informing you of the Lord's great goodness to me and mine. Indeed, it is marvellous. How many blessings have I which numbers want? And how many have I, in not desiring what I do want? Whichever way I turn myself, blessings meet me, and yet I know not why I am so highly favoured, unless it be that God may be highly honoured. For none can be more unworthy, and, therefore, from none can grace get so

much glory. My election is not ended about Blackfriars. Law goes on. But I am quite out of it. My mind is at peace. Thanks be to the dear, ever dear Jesus. It is my one desire to please him; but how or where is not my business. He must look to that. All his flock is infinitely precious; and none of them shall perish for lack of knowledge. If he want me to feed his sheep at Blackfriars, I shall go. If he does not, I trust I shall not go from him. Forbid it, Lord! And if his presence does but go with me wherever I am, then I shall be there doing his will. So be it, sweet Jesus!

Your last account of my mother was very reviving to me. I hope I shall see her once more on this earth, (I have no doubt of seeing her in heaven,) and rejoice with her in the goodness of the Lord to her soul. When it will be I cannot tell, on account of this law-suit. But, God willing, nothing shall hinder my calling upon you sometime this summer.

Yours, W. R.

LETTER XII.

My dear Sister,—I thank you for your kind letter, and for your care of the enclosed. It was the last sheet of my sermons. I used to think I should never live to finish them; and yet God has lengthened my life, and this part of my work is done. These are some of my last thoughts, what I now think about religion. The thoughts which support me in the near views of death and judgment. I am wholly now for magnifying the grace and love of our

dear Redeemer. He deserves more of me than I shall pay him to eternity; and therefore I would desire with Paul to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. To know him as crucified for me, and to feel the power and efficacy of his oblation on the cross, crucifying sin in me. To know this, is enough. Nothing more need be known. All besides is vanity, and will be vexation of spirit. Believe me, my dear sister, I have tried all that you can try out of him; and it is now grief to my heart. I not only renounce it, but also renounce it with sorrow, and that I should set up any thing against my precious Saviour, and leave him to seek for any elsewhere. He is all in all. What would ye more? For "it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell." May you and I dwell where all fulness is! I would have wrote sooner, but Mr. Grimshaw promised to send you a letter as soon as possible he could after we parted. Blessed be God, I bore my journey well. Nothing happened of what Mr. G. told, till I got home. I found my family well. As to myself, I am neither well nor ill: but it is best to be as God would have us to be. His will be done! I hope my dear mother will soon receive him whom her soul longeth after. I do not doubt it. He has promised, and he cannot break his word. "He filleth the hungry with good things." My love to my sisters. I will send you some sermons soon. Pray for your brother in the strongest bonds,

W. R.

LETTER XIII.

Lambeth, April 23.

GRACE and peace be to my dear sister, from that ever, ever blessed Jesus. Glory be to him. What wonders is he now doing in the earth ! What miracles of love ! Can there be greater than that you and I, such poor sinners, should have daily reason to praise and to bless him, and that we should have so many reasons to believe he will let us praise and bless him to all eternity ? O sister, is not this astonishing goodness ? In sin dead, and liable to the second death, from hence he has raised us to a state of grace, and ere long will raise us to a state of glory. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name.

He that is so infinitely kind to private persons, is the very same to his church ; for that is only a congregation of private persons. What seems to hurt some of them is for the good of all. For the government of all is upon his shoulders, and he looks to the least, as well as to the greatest of his matters. Not a hair falls, and much less a minister, without his appointment. I dare not therefore think one hard thought of his taking dear Mr. Grimshaw to himself. His work was done. The Lord took him to rest ; and, as to his people, they will be well looked after. Their Shepherd will see to it, that they lack nothing. “ But where, say you, shall they go now, to find green pastures, and the waters of comfort ? ” Why, let them go to the great Shepherd and Bishop

of souls. Himself will feed them, as Psalm xxiii. "But he does it by means;" that is true; and is not he the Lord of means? Cannot he find out means, when we are at a loss, if we look up with faith to him? I verily believe that Mr. Grimshaw's death will be as useful as his life; and the work is not yet come to its height in Yorkshire. No, it will spread farther, and deeper still; ministers' removals, yea, the most useful of us, shall tend to spread it. For all things work together, under God, for his glory and his people's good.

The more I think and preach about the infinitely rich Jesus, and his love, the greater still does he appear. My heart grows warmer to him. His cause grows more amiable; and nothing gives me pain, but that I do so little for him, and speak so poorly of him, and that this lazy body is so soon tired in his work. But I would do better, and shall too, by and by. Aye, that is my comfort. I shall not always live at this poor rate. When I see him, I shall be like him. Farewell then to sin and sorrow. Temptations farewell. Corruption is no more. O blessed time! Lord Jesus Christ fit you and me for the sight and enjoyment of himself! W. R.

LETTER XIV.

GRACE and peace be to my dear sister.—I can thank the God of all grace for what he has already done for my mother; and I have no doubt but that he, who has begun the good work, will perfect it in her. She shall have peace: not because I say so,

but God. He has promised it to her. She is seeking; she shall find. Trusting to his word, which cannot be broken, I am as easy about her as if I saw her in heaven. Which of us shall be there first, I know not; but I am waiting, not knowing when my Lord will come. On him I rest to carry me through life, through death; believing that, when he calls me hence, I shall see him face to face, to my eternal joy. And in his presence I shall find my dear mother, and you; yes, you, my sister. Only hold fast the faith, and soon you will win the crown. The devil has a vast spite against you. He begins to despair of drawing you from Christ, and then his malice puts him upon plaguing you. He will make your way as troublesome as he can. One of his grand engines against believers is error. If he can get the judgment wrong, he hopes thereby to prejudice the will, and so gain upon the heart. Thus he has always been undermining the church. O beware of this temptation. He commonly introduces it thus: "You are in Christ, and you are a believer; but you want light in such a doctrine." He allows the doctrine, but draws a false inference from it, under a pretence of illustrating the doctrine. Would you, my dear sister, not be ignorant of his devices! pray to be humble. Much humility is better than much knowledge. Many knowing persons have been lost; but none truly humble. The Lord Jesus keep you, and make you, in him, complete and happy. I have not forgot the Catechism, but I have not settled since I left you. I am at Brighthelmstone, in Sussex, and shall not be gone till November. The Lord has been wonderfully

with us here, and many souls are awakened. Some walking rejoicing in the Lord, and vast congregations. I am, with great truth, your loving brother,

W. R.

LETTER XV.

MY dear Sister,—To whom I wish an increase of grace. I could delay no longer to thank you for your kind present, which came safe, and for your kinder letter. Your good wishes and prayers are the best present. Let me still share in them. I never wanted them more. My affair at Blackfriars is not settled; and I have strong applications to go to America, to a church in the city of Philadelphia. The Lord must determine. I would not have one wish against his will. Being bought with an infinite price, all I have and am should be at his service. He has a clear right to all: "Take it, Lord. Let it be thine for ever." But I shall not be in any hurry. Waiting is good—on the Lord. I will tarry his leisure, and look at his providences. My friends, in general, are for my staying in London; and so am I in my own mind. But I dare not choose, till my choice is made plain to me. Perhaps the Lord may fix me at Blackfriars; and then the matter will be ended at once.

My hearty prayers are for my dear mother, that this year may be the happiest she ever saw. May she find Christ in it. He has sought her out, and found her; but she has not, in comfortable enjoyment, found him. That I wish and pray for, not

doubting of the event ; because I have his word that I shall succeed. “ Seek, and ye shall find,” says he. His word is infallible. May she soon experience it in the joy of his salvation ! W. R.

LETTER XVI.

Lambeth, Jan. 7, 1766.

My dear Sister,—Although I am greatly hurried, yet I could not help informing you, that this day my cause about Blackfriars was finally determined, and in my favour. I have retired and been alone this afternoon to abase myself. This is to me an amazing event. That such a one should be made a pastor ; one that is plagued to death with his own heart, to make him a watchman over others ! What is the Lord doing ? With the most utter abhorrence of myself, and of my being unfit to be minister of a great parish, in the midst of this great city—I have been forced to leave it to the Lord.

I have heard, in my heart, a voice say, “ Whom shall I send ? ” And I have been compelled to say, “ Here I am, send me.” Trusting then, sweet Jesus, to thy grace and power, depending upon thine arm and blessing, out I go, not only unfit, but also averse to the work. It is thine, Lord, “ to work in me both to will and to do.”

I believe you love me ; indeed, I do not doubt of it ; and therefore I give you this notice, to pray your Master and my Master, to fit me for this new work. He knows my heart, I never had one desire for this new work, but that I might have more room to glo-

rify my Jesus. I would not look at any thing but at his glory, and at my humility. Will you entreat him, then, thus to set forth his praise? Beg of him to help me to exalt him, and to keep me down.
 Your affectionate brother, W. R.

LETTER XVII.

My dear Sister,—I have longed for a little time to write you a few lines, to thank you for your last letter, and for your kind remembrance of me at our court. Pray continue me that favour. And, when the King smiles upon you, and you have freedom to approach, and have access with confidence into his royal presence, then make request for your brother. He knows, for he sent me upon, my present work. I find myself as unfit for it as a dog that cannot bark, and therefore for grace, for gifts, for success, I am forced to depend upon him. Most gladly would I live as a minister, in the same way that I live as a Christian, “by the faith of the Son of God,” trusting in him to do all for me. There is my own safety. As a sinner, I have no confidence in any thing, but the finished salvation, the blood and righteousness of the Lamb of God. This being a sure foundation for a sinner to rest upon, and having myself found how sure it is, I can therefore write freely, and mightily encourage all that hear, be they who they will, to venture upon this foundation, which God hath laid; leaving the success (but O that it may be abundant!) to him from whom alone it cometh.

Being safely built upon this foundation, I find continual matter of rejoicing. Whichever way I look, comfort presents itself. To be saved from what I was once, brought to what I am now, the God of all consolation become my God, his Son my Saviour, his Spirit my leader to heaven, his promises mine; all, all mine, now enjoyed by faith; for ever, in full possession! What divine comforts are these! With these I would encourage the miserable to come to Jesus; that, having trusted themselves with him, he might have the glory of making them happy. O that I may prevail! Say, I want for "this, grace every moment." I call, and he in whom all fulness dwells, says to me, "I will water thee every moment." I believe it—I experience it. Grace has made me willing to live out of myself—upon the fulness of Jesus. In him I have what I want; yea, from him I gain by my wants. I grow richer by my poverty, and happier by my misery. Whatever it be that brings me to live more upon his grace, is the means of my getting more grace, and thereby proves to me a real blessing. As I have freely received this grace, so I freely make the publication of it with all its benefits. I can tell my people, and boldly, that we are saved by grace, kept by grace, comforted by grace, sanctified by grace: and, although this be the doctrine against which the wicked one, the wicked world, and above all, the self-righteous world, fight, with all their might; yet I am not discouraged, because Jesus is my strength. On him I depend for counsel to set about the work, for success in it, for a blessing upon it. If opposition arise, and it cannot but be that he who is born after

the flesh, should persecute him that is born of the Spirit ; to my almighty King I fly, and on his promised help I trust. Oppose what will, Jesus is on the throne. All power in heaven and earth is his. By faith, strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, I have seen the most formidable opposition fall before me. Therefore, let us go on, walking straight forward to Jesus, whatever may stand to stop us in the way. If war arise, hot, fierce, and long battles ; many enemies, mighty and strong, all the hosts of earth and hell ; then Jesus is my victory. He arms me for the battle, with the whole armour of God ; clad in which, he teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight ; strengthens the heart to hold out in long battles ; discovers plots and wiles of subtle foes ; gives courage to meet the roaring lion ; brings the soldier off conqueror day by day, and more than conqueror at last, his enemies all eternally vanquished ; he then sits down upon a throne crowned with everlasting glory and honour. It is blessed, fighting through Jesus our captain : O what will it be to reign with Jesus our King ! Heaven it is upon earth to enjoy him ; and there is heaven in every thing which brings me to more enjoyment of him. This the apostle had in his eye, and he had a great deal of it in his heart, when he called upon his Ephesians to grow up into him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ. Mind, all things, while we live by faith, shall make us grow up into Christ more closely and intimately ; finding you want him daily more and more, for life and godliness, for body and soul, for time and eternity : so that, without him you can do nothing. The abiding sense

of this will keep you in your right place, as a poor helpless creature, hanging on the arm, living on the bounty of the infinitely rich Jesus. This is the believer's growth. He grows more up into Christ. Taught by the Spirit of Jesus, he sees and feels his want of every good ; and he is made to see and feel this continually, that he may not live upon self, upon any creature, upon worldly happiness ; but that, finding his need of Jesus every moment, he may be receiving every moment, grace for grace out of Jesus' fulness. O for more of the teaching of that Spirit, to humble us, and to glorify Jesus ! O for more fellowship with him in his fulness of grace ! Heaven is nothing more than fellowship with him in his fulness of glory. May my dear mother know him thus ! I cease not to remember her at his throne, Her case is safe. I only wish her more happy in believing it. All here are well, and desire to be remembered to you, with your truly affectionate brother,

W. R.

LETTER XVIII.

1766.

My dear Sister,—Grace be with you. I begin to think it long since I heard from Hartlepool ; but supposing you make nothing of the note which I sent from Helmsley, I must therefore write first, which I gladly do, embracing this and all occasions to tell of Jesus' love. His mercies have followed me all the days of my life—most free and undeserved—to body and soul. Surely a greater monument lives

not. He brought me home safe—keeps me in health—gives me enough and to spare of this world's good; and I taste the love of the Giver in his every gift. What would I more? Why, truly, nothing in this world. But if I am thus indebted for temporal blessings, where shall I begin to set forth his infinite grace in spirituals? I am that brand, such as the like is not, plucked by almighty love out of the burning. I might have been in it forty, aye, fifty years ago, and in it for ever. O what patience was there in the Lamb! But he was resolved to have all the glory: and indeed he richly deserves it—both for saving me out of hell, and for giving himself to me to be a Saviour; and for giving his Spirit to bring me to know myself, and to know him, whom to know is life eternal. All the angels, all the saints, could not tell how great his love already experienced is to me. How far short must I myself fall? I am content he should have the crown. It well becomes the head of King Jesus. I pay him willing homage, and am glad to take a free pardon, a perfect title to heaven, at his royal hands. Indebted to him for heaven, makes the thoughts of it sweet. I would not be out of his debt if I could.

Are not you glad (I know you are) that to me Jesus has been so exceedingly kind in all things? Yea, to mine, my family, and relations. What grace has been shown? How much are we bound to acknowledge his bounty? O let us with our lips and lives show forth his praise! and let my mother join. I am sure she ought. Blessings on her from the best of friends. So prays yours and hers in a precious, ever precious Saviour.

W. R.

LETTER XIX.

Lambeth, 1767.

MY dear Sister,—I was in hopes you would have disposed of my charity before this, and would have let me know to whom I am to pay the money. I am thankful you had my commission, for I think it can never be more wanted. The good Lord secure to himself all the glory of this, and of every act of kindness to his afflicted members. I am praying for my dear mother; Jesus hear me; that this may be the grand year of her life, when she will say,—“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name, for he hath forgiven thee all thy sins. He himself is become thy salvation.” O what a journey should I have to Hartlepool, if I was to come and hear this voice of joy and thanksgiving! Well, I do not doubt of it. All is now safe. All will be comfortable when the Lord pleases. Let him do what seemeth him good. A happy, happy year to her and to you!

Through mercy, I am going on very well. I want nothing but more capacity to praise and to enjoy Jesus. He is very near to me, and he makes himself very dear. He still smiles on our meetings, and is in the midst of us. Blackfriars is owned by him. He has set to his seal that God is there. O for more of his presence to fill the ordinances with life and power. Pray for us, my dear sister, and you will not lose any thing by our having much of Christ with us. We will pray for you in return.

To him I commend you, whose love is truly heaven,
even upon earth. May you never want it till you
enjoy all its fulness, together with your loving brother,
W. R.

LETTER XX.

Blackfriars, Nov. 19, 1768.

My dear Sister,—You tell me good news of poor sinners converted, and of believers settled and established in their most holy faith. My heart rejoices to hear of any increase of Jesus' glory. He is the Prince of the kings of the earth, to whom all blessing is due. Yea, he is above all blessing and praise, and that for evermore; because he humbled himself, God was made man. O wonderful humiliation!—He went lower; humbled himself to become obedient—obedient unto death—even the death of the cross—therefore he is highly exalted. King of kings—crowned—many crowns upon his head. O how I triumph in my inmost soul in his love! He loved me—I pay him homage—all within me, all without me, blesses his holy name. He is my King—my royal Saviour—I pay him my allegiance with heart and hand. Not that he may be away—away with that proud thought!—but because he is mine:—therefore I would walk before him, without fear, in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

My kind love to Mr. Heslop, and desire him to exalt Jesus. He cannot set him too high. He cannot think of him so high as he is; so high as he deserves. The higher he is exalted, the more will every thing, *sin especially*, bow before him.

When you write to Sunderland or Newcastle, pray remember me to my sisters, their husbands, and to their families. I desire and beg for an interest in your prayers, and am, with my duty to my dear mother, and prayers for her, your affectionate friend and brother,

W. R.

LETTER XXI.

Nov. 7, 1769.

My dear Sister,—Grace and peace be multiplied unto you. May you be growing and increasing in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and have a sweet and abiding sense of it in your heart, enjoying daily more of that peace of God, which is heaven begun. I pray you not to rest or stop in any attainments. Keep going on. Be pressing forward. Faith should grow. We read of going from faith to faith, from one degree to another. There should be a progress both in the knowledge of your interest in Jesus, and in the enjoyment of the good things in which you are interested. If faith must grow, then hope must also; for hope is the daughter of faith. By faith we trust the word of God, by hope we wait, till we receive the promises in his word. Hope is never disappointed, nor does it ever make ashamed. It gets many a pledge, and brings in sweet foretastes of the things hoped for. A true believer therefore never says, I have enough. No, no; his hunger and thirst increases by tastes and crumbs of glory. What falls from his Lord's table, whets his appetite for the marriage supper. So the apostle prays for the be-

believing Romans—"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope by the Holy Ghost." Now in proportion as faith and hope grow, so does love.—We love God, because we believe he first loved us; and this love increases as faith gives a more substantial presence to the things hoped for. Love is now in its infancy—the greatest love upon earth is but one ray of the morning dawn, compared to the shining of the perfect day. O my dear sister, never think you have attained perfect love till you get into a perfect heaven. Be still going on growing in grace, and in the knowledge and love of God your Saviour. There is room enough for this, both on Jesus' part, and on yours also. He can give more. You can receive more. And, as faith enlarges your vessel, you will hold more. As hope increases, you will enjoy more. And this I pray heartily, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all sensible feeling, that you may walk in love, till faith and hope leave you in full possession of the love of God in life everlasting.

I write thus, because I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy. I am afraid you should stop by the way. Many do. They set out well, but fall asleep, and dream of being in heaven, while their warfare is carrying on upon earth. They fancy to themselves a triumphant state, while they are militant. A sad delusion! Because it tempts them to rest when they should be fighting, and to sit still when they should be pressing forward. Are you a believer? Yes. Well then, the gospel says, "Forget the things which are behind, and reach forth unto

the things which are before." How long must I do this? Till you have laid hold of eternal life. Faith should be growing, hope should be increasing, and love abounding, unto death; or, as the apostle has it, 1 Thess. i. 3. faith should be at its work, love at its labour, hope at its patience, waiting on patiently, till we have finished our course with joy. I pray God you may be thus employed when death calls you to judgment.

Remember me with all duty to my dear mother. I bless God for his great grace to her, and doubt not but he hears prayer for its continuance. My love to Mr. Heslop, and let him read the former part of the letter, and study it. I would have him not grown up (till he is dead,) but growing up into Christ Jesus in all things.

I have been trying to spread the fame of our precious Jesus in various parts of England—a journey of near 800 miles.

I rejoice with you in the spreading of the gospel in your parts. It is the Lord's doing; and it should be marvellous in our eyes.

You must not forget me in your prayers. I want them much. At present I am in a great difficulty. My lecturer is gone, and I am forced to do the duty myself—for fear a false prophet should get in. I did not seek it; but I hope the Lord, now he has called me to it, will give me will and power, and if it please him, success. Desire your friends to pray for me.

My wife travelled with me. We found the children well. I have nothing to tell of but mercies. May the Giver add one to them all—even a heart

to praise, and to bless his goodness. Amen. I am,
with great truth, your loving brother, W. R.

LETTER XXII.

My dear Sister,—It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good. So says faith; so should you and I say. My thoughts upon this occasion have not been improved as I could wish, through great bodily pain and indisposition; but such reflections as these have greatly tended to quiet my mind, and to produce a willing submission:—

First, My mother's true conversion to the Lord. She knew in whom she had believed; and she was in Christ. Christ was her gain, both in life and death. Glory be to him for this great grace.

Secondly, She died in faith. O what a mercy, to finish all well! What are we desiring for ourselves, as Christians, but the same mercy, that we may hold out to the end, and finish our course with joy?
• Therefore,

Thirdly, We are not to mourn as those who have no hope. Our dearest friend is with her Lord, with whom we expect to be soon. We have only parted a moment, that we may meet for ever. It looks to me, in my near view of death, only like my taking leave of my dear mother, to go yearly to London. I shall go to her—blessed, truly blessed prospect! and I do not wish her to come back to me:—because,

Fourthly, I do indeed find that the Lord supplies the want of all creature-comforts with his own

presence. When he takes them away, it is to make more room for himself in the heart. A sweet exchange ! we live upon the fountain when the streams are dried up. He dries them up to make us come nearer to the fountain, and that the absence of temporal mercies might be supplied with a happy enjoyment and communion with God himself.

She had lived to a blessed time—even speaking after the manner of men—she died in a good old age, full of years—and was gathered to her people, to whom I am going. Now it is my turn. I know of nothing worth living for one day. We are now travellers ; and what traveller does not wish to be at rest ? We are now absent from our Lord ; and home is home. What soldier, after a hard campaign, does not wish for winter quarters ? What man in love does not wish the moments to fly swiftly, to bring on his wedding-day ? O for that blessed consummation which will last for ever and ever, to all eternity.

I shall love you, my dear sister, as long as I live, for your attention to my dear mother. You have done your part. May you do all as well as this ! I thank you for my part, and honour you greatly. My kind love to Mr. Heslop. He has been tried with his attention to my mother ; the good Lord repay his kindness a thousandfold. Mine eyes overflow with tears while I am thinking of both your goodness to her—God bless you both—God bless you. My kind love to my sisters and their husbands.

Poor Hartlepool ! few know this loss. It is the greatest the town could have.

W. R.

LETTER XXIII.

Blackfriars, Sept. 6, 1771.

GRACE be with you and your yoke-fellow. I know we are in a dying world. I see it, and feel it. It is my heart's desire to live under the constant impression of this truth; there is but a step between me and death; but a step between me and the full enjoyment of what I have now by faith. It is not that I love you not—God knoweth my love to you is double—you are twice my sister, born and new-born. And I truly esteem you both in the flesh, and in the spirit. But I could not come and tell you this face to face, but I shall come, God willing, and tell it you, and the reasons too, that you may be satisfied. Only wait patiently, and see how good the Lord will be to us in this, and in all other things that we wait upon him for. It is my fixed purpose to visit you as early as I can in the spring; but the great Disposer of all our purposes has us in his hands. Our will must bow to his sovereign will; and, in submission to it, we always speak of to-morrow, not knowing what a day may bring forth.

I can very well supply my absence. There is no want of preaching; we have enough of that, and too much in the preacher's strength. We want prayer greatly—a dependence on the almighty Head to bless preaching to his people. This seems to be wanting both in preachers and hearers. I can do something towards the supply of this want: and am trying at it. O that fervent effectual prayer was but ascending

more and oftener to the throne of grace, we should have more showers of blessings coming down. I beg not to be forgotten by you at any time before the throne. May I never forget you nor yours.

Errors and heresies are rampant. God keep you. I beg of Mr. Heslup to be much at his Bible: he reads other books too much. I am sure God the Holy Ghost is the best writer; and I find him the best expositor upon his own writings. Tell Mr. Heslup so. I repent of years wasted in fruitless study, and am, just as my studies are over, got to be right in them. I wish he may improve by my mistakes, and now in earnest resolve to be a Bible-student, and a Bible-Christian. Farewell, my dear sister. May all the rich covenant mercies of our Jesus be yours. I am, for his sake, very sincerely, your loving brother,
W. R.

My wife joins in every Christian wish. The children are well.

LETTER XXIV.

Blackfriars, Oct. 27, 1771.

My dear Sister,—Often remembered, and interest made for you at our court. I have been upon the King's business, travelling from place to place, to exalt and honour him, for near three months. He has been pleased to bring me safe home for the winter, and I sit down the first opportunity to thank you for all your kindness to me at Hartlepool. I did not doubt of your love, but my visit this year confirmed me in it. Your

whole behaviour convinced me that I was a welcome guest, and has kept a warm desire upon my mind to see you again. Thankful am I for what I met with of the same kind, both at Newcastle and Sunderland, especially at the latter, as I was never so highly honoured before, as to be suffered to speak for my glorious Jesus. Although things were not so pleasing at Yarum, yet I forgive from my very heart Mr. O.'s treatment: for I believe G. M. is a dear child of God, and was misled by his partner, who misrepresented me. People will quarrel; I would hinder them if I could; but quarrel I will not: no, not with Mr. O. Thanks be to the Prince of peace, he has taught me better things. I know him God-man; I believe in his work—it is the greatest work of God—a complete, an eternal salvation. O marvellous grace, I enjoy it. While others dispute about it, I am possessing it. They busy themselves about shadows, and I am rejoicing in the substance. Would to God Mr. O. had the same fellowship with Jesus. Poor man! he would not talk of himself before the Lord God, and plead his own doings—he would not urge this plea: “Lord, my works last July were very meritorious, for I stood and tried to stop all I could from going to Yarum church, to hear that heretic Romaine, who was going to teach them, that they were to be saved wholly and solely for what you had done and suffered, and all glory as well as all grace by the way, was to be had entirely out of your fullness.” But enough of this: Mr. W. forgives him; so do I: Christ forgive him.

My motto has long been, “Cease ye from man.” All my experience leads me to trust man less, and

God more. My Bible is my study, and the Holy Ghost my commentator. I have done with names—great authorities—and living popes—for we have an English Pope. In opposition to whom, I am a Protestant. I protest against the merit of works, and all its long train of errors; but I will not dispute with any Pope. I will rather pray for him, as I do. God open his eyes, and turn him from darkness to light, from blind Popery, into gospel liberty.

My love to Mr. Heslop. I fear for him, lest these times should take him off from Christ, and get him into disputing. Desire him, from me, to read his Bible more, and not busy himself about opinions. What has he or I to do with Mr. Wesley? Let him go on in his way; and let us go on in ours. But let us be as diligent as him—our lives as exemplary—our good works as many. And let us beat him all to nothing in charity. If he revile, let us pray. If he be dogmatical, let us be meek and lowly. I cannot give any account for my writing about him; for I do not love to have any thing to do with him; but it came upon my mind, and I let it stand. I should rejoice to hear from you. We are all well. I am, yours and Mr. Heslop's, very heartily,
W. R.

LETTER XXV.

Nov. 9, 1771.

MY dear Sister,—I beg the favour of you, upon the receipt of this, to give me some account of my sisters, and their husbands and families: and also how

you go on at Hartlepool. You must not think me indifferent to the cause and interest of God any where; but surely not among our own relations, and least of all among relations hitherto so kind and obliging to me. I send you my written sermons when I cannot come to preach in person, but I am waiting in hope when I shall confirm my doctrine by word of mouth, and find a proper time to bear my testimony again to the divine glory of the person of Jesus, and to his absolutely perfect salvation. Be assured, my dear sister, it is complete, lacking nothing. We carry nothing to him, but receive all from him. We have, from his fulness, change of state, of tempers, of life. He is the author of all our good thoughts, words, and works. If these have any merit, it must be put to his account and not to ours; for he worketh all for us, and all in us. And he will, and must have all the glory too. O that you may be willing to give it him! That is true holy humility. You cannot think what grace he gives to them who are willing to return him all his glory. Try, pray for a growing sense of your own unworthiness; and the lower and viler you are in your own eyes, the more will he be honoured for his grace, and therefore he will give you more; for he giveth grace unto the humble. Nothing stops the current of his favours so much as pride: he resisteth the proud; he is at war with them. A sad war! a proud sinner fighting against a holy God. Who think ye will conquer? and how low will the proud be laid? O beware of all high thoughts. Take heed of admiring your own greatness or goodness. Self-delight is a very pleasing sin, but more odious to a

jealous God than the gross sins of the flesh. I see those who fall in love with themselves, do not think with me about my heavenly Lover : I am sure, the more we love him, the less we shall admire ourselves. The Pharisee, full of self-complacency, remained in his guilt ; the poor publican, who loathed himself, went home justified : so must we go to heaven, pleading all the way, and pleading there too, mercy of God through Jesus Christ, and nothing else.

You will say, what is all this to me ? Why, truly, sister, you want it. There is no perfect humility but in heaven. Till we get there, we should be learning, and every day seeking for more grace to humble us—learning of our Master to be meek and lowly. May God make you and me better scholars, and Mr. Heslup ; for he wants much to keep him down. My kind love to all friends. Do not fail me in writing the first post. I commend you to Jesus' care and love, being truly yours in him. W. R.

LETTER XXVI.

Dec. 22, 1772.

MY dear Sister,—Although I have not heard from you for some time, yet I cannot help wishing you every Christmas blessing. And what these are, how many, how great, none can tell. It is the great mystery of godliness : God manifest in the flesh—God born for us in the flesh—born in us by the Spirit. Then we keep our Christmas, when we are new born, the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. This new birth of Christ, formed in us and

dwelling in our hearts by faith, appears, as our birth into this world does. The new-born babe enters the world with crying : so they who have received the Spirit of adoption cry, "Abba, Father." They are the brethren of Christ, one with him ; and his Father is their Father. O inestimable privilege ! What a blessing to believe it ! what blessings come from enjoying it ! How many soever they be, I wish them yours. When the infant is born, it cries for food ; in like manner, believers, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby. In Christ their souls live, as their bodies do in this world : on him also they live, and by feeding on his word, and mixing prayer and praise with it, they grow up into him in all things—doing nothing, either temporal or spiritual, but by the faith of the Son of God. For ever blessed are they who keep such a Christmas—who can call Christ their brother, his Father their Father, by the indwelling Spirit ; and who can evidence this to themselves and others, by a conversation directed to the glory of God.

Thus would I live, thus may you live !—in Christ, and on Christ, and to Christ. If we receive much from him, let us not rob him of his honour. If we do much for him, we have nothing to boast of ; for he worketh in us both to will and to do. I am for good works as much as any of them ; but I would do them to a right end, and upon a right motive ; and after all, having done the best that can be done, I would not lay the weight of the least tittle of my salvation—no, not one atom of it, upon them. It all rests on Christ—he is my only foundation—he

is my topstone: and all the building, laid on him, groweth up into a holy temple in the Lord. He has done all for me: he does all in me: He does all by me. To him be all the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Times are very hard; but the best things are the cheapest. You may have Christ for nothing; and the more freely you receive, the more freely you will honour him with his gifts. So I feel it. Remember me to your poor: I beg their prayers, for I want them much.

My kind love to Mr. Heslop. I wish Christ and he were better acquainted. I am sure the more he knows of Christ, the more he will love him, and his word and ways, because of Christ himself revealed in them. Farewell, my dear sister, and I charge you not to forget, in your daily prayers, your true friend and brother,
W. R.

LETTER XXVII.

June 26, 1773.

My dear Sister,—I am obliged to you for your last favour. You would have received my acknowledgment sooner, but I was waiting to see how my way would be directed this summer. I have waited so long that I am quite ashamed to be silent any longer, and therefore take my pen to tell you that there is at present nothing determined about my travels. I hope to be where the Lord pleases, and to be found doing his work. Then all will be well wherever I am.

My thoughts often run about poor Hartlepool. I believe the Lord has a people among you, and I wish he may honour Mr. Heslup, by making him useful to gather them together, and to build them up in their most holy faith. My prayers are not wanting for him and them; particularly I desire the Prince of peace to keep him from a disputing spirit. I do not know that he is given to it, but I know many who are, whose principles, as well as tempers, incline them to be of a self-righteous, and therefore of a censorious and wrangling spirit. I have suffered more from such than from all the world beside. Bid Mr. Heslup take warning from me. I advise him to avoid controversy as he would the plague. And if he would be kept entirely, I will tell him how I am kept. The doctrines which others are disputing about, I am living upon. They have ceased to be with me matters of controversy. I have brought them into experience. By which means, I not only am certain of their truth, but also receive from it great profit. Doubting and disputing are at an end; for what room can there be to question any doctrine, while it is really practical, and brings in a great revenue? Thus a man gets to be settled. Others quarrel about the shell, he feeds upon the kernel, and often feasts upon it.

My wife is in good health. We all desire to be kindly remembered to you and to Mr. Heslup, especially your loving brother,

W. R.

LETTER XXVIII.

May 24, 1777.

My dear Sister,—As to the particulars about house and land, I write nothing. Hope to see you in June, as I promised ; and see nothing at present to stop me. If I keep my word, will not God? And what is faith but taking him at his word? what is all religion but trusting to his faithfulness? Is not this the highest service of the heart; and, if it be real there, the service also of the life? For the obedience of faith is the obedience of the whole man. What honour does this put upon God? His wisdom in contriving such a salvation, his love in revealing it, his power in working it out, his promises of giving it freely, and his fulfilling them perfectly: these and all his attributes are glorified in believing; for then we set to our seal that God is true. We are of one mind with him, of one will with him; and, if we can trust simply what he says—yea, trust when difficulties be in the way of his fulfilling his word—then we show that our faith is strong: but if we can trust against seeming impossibilities, against hope believe in hope, then we prove ourselves the children of believing Abraham. I can assure you, sister, that my highest lesson is this; and I learn it slowly. I want to honour God in his word, by believing against sense: sometimes it is well with me, but presently I stagger. Yet I aim at stronger standing in faith daily. Pray for me. My love to Mr. Heslop. I have no advice to give him till I see him; only I

wish he may not move till the cloud moves. Mr. M. breakfasted with me to-day, who is still misinformed, and lives at a very low rate in believing.

W. R.

LETTER XXIX.

Aug. 5, 1769.

My dear Mother,—This is the first letter that I have had time to write since I left Hartlepool; and as you have a right to my daily remembrance, I begin my correspondence where it is first due. My journey was very pleasant, not hot nor dusty. All quiet and happy within. The Lord's countenance shining in an unclouded sky. Mercies upon mercies—heaped up and running over. It seems as if I was singled out to be a witness for my God, that his mercies are above all his works. I arrived safe and visited my house, and found fresh matter of praise and thanksgiving. All glory be to free grace!

When I look back to Hartlepool, and review the dealings of a precious Jesus with you and with yours, my debt increases: and when I consider his goodness to Hartlepool sinners, and Bishoprick sinners—how many of them he has called from darkness to light, O what a tribute of praise ought we to be continually paying to the Saviour of the North country! And if we particularly consider our relations, one by one, whom it has pleased our good God to work upon by his Holy Spirit, we should call upon all within us to bless his holy name, and all without us to join in showing forth his praise.

This, for my own part, I would most gladly do, having seen so much in my last journey, both of his presence with me, and of his grace working by me, that I am ready to join all that are praising our good God, and to crown our royal Lord and Saviour, the free giver of all blessings both in earth and in heaven.

I have had a good time at the Assizes, and preached to a vast congregation. The seed was sown; but the great Sower is the Son of man himself: unless he rain and shine upon the word, man's ploughing and harrowing and sowing will come to nothing. I would therefore preach, as well as live, in a constant dependence upon the blessing of Jesus. After mentioning the loving kindness of the Lord, we should remember our want of it still, and how we are to receive the supply of our continual wants. We have a prayer-hearing God. He has answered all our petitions for you; whereby he has encouraged us to come again without doubt or wavering. This I hope to do for you, my dear mother, as long as you or I are within the reach of prayer. He has let you live to a good time. You know him; you believe in him, as your Jesus. He is your Lord and your God. It is our part and duty to beg of him, that you may be every day growing in grace, and in the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus; and that, whenever he shall be pleased to take you to himself, you may witness a good confession, and confirm the truth by your death, as you do by your life. I beg my love to Mr. and Mrs. Heslop. Pray tell them, that I never had so pleasant a journey in all my life, so many gracious providences, and so many outward mercies, besides the

peace in my own soul;—encouragements these not to neglect coming another summer. O that, whenever I do come, it may be to the praise of the glory of rich free grace; and, if I stay longer than I used to do, which all appearances seem to favour, may the good Lord overrule a longer stay for greater good.

And as I hope there are several in Hartlepool who have nearness to the throne of grace, I desire you would, one by one, desire them to make use of their interests for me. If you see my brother Parker and wife, or Callender and wife, entreat the same favour of them. I ask it of none but those who are already in my debt, and who ought to get out of it as fast as they can.—I am, with my duty to you, and my love and respect to all friends, your affectionate son, and most obedient servant, W. R.

LETTER XXX.

July 26, 1793.

My good Brother,—I was very glad to see your testimony at last concerning my sister, and thank you for it. She was the Lord's: she lived to him and on him, and she is with him; where I hope you and I shall soon be with him, and like him for evermore. Till that happy day, you are called upon to be a public witness for him. May you preach him in his glorious fulness, and may the Holy Ghost come down from heaven upon your preaching, that Northumberland sinners may hear and live. Do your best. Exalt him with all your might, in your pulpit and in your living, you will do but little.

I am an old preacher, and have seen enough of his glory to be ashamed of myself. I reprobate all my services; and, if I were to begin again, I would try to shoot higher: and I do. Blessings on him! He is above all blessing and praise. Perhaps, before I see you, I may see him face to face, when he will enable me, without one selfish thought, to give him all the glory. To him I commend you. May he supply my sister's place. You will miss her more every day. Your lesson is to pray him to fill up her absence with his presence. Pray for it. So does
W. R.

LETTERS

TO

W. TAYLOR, ESQ.

LETTER I.

March 5, 1788.

My dear Friend,—I am in your debt for Jan. 1, 1788. It has never been out of my mind—but I have really too much business for my age and growing infirmities; yet, whenever I think of lessening my work, Luke ix. 62. frightens me, and I set out afresh to get on, as my Lord shall help me. Our word for this year is preaching day and night to my inmost soul—I am “Looking to Jesus”—a sight that would do an angel good, and much more a sinner; for his name is Wonderful. There is none like him in heaven or earth. Consider his nature, his essential glory, or his offices—his mediatorial glory, from what he saves us freely, and to what he brings us perfectly, even to life eternal: surely he is a matchless Jesus. And he wants only to be known, that he may win our hearts, and we may admire and adore him. Why is not he then universally admired? If man had no failing in his faculties, he could not help falling in love with such

infinite beauty. But he is blind; yea, truly he is dead. He has lost not this or that thing, but the very Spirit of life, and thereby all communion with the spiritual world. He is actually dead in trespasses and sins. And when the Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus frees him from the law of sin and of death, then he receives spiritual senses, and is able to see him by faith who was before invisible. His first look is generally for healing. He beholds the Lamb that was slain, and finds peace through his cleansing blood. The Spirit gives him to seal the testimony of the Father concerning the Son. He believes, and the more simply, the more virtue flows from Jesus, to purify and to rejoice the heart. He believes on, reads the faithful word, hears it, prays over it, and the Spirit applies it, making Jesus still more precious. Every fresh look to him confirms the reality, and increases the blessedness of living by faith upon him: and thus daily communion with him nourishes spiritual life, and renders it more easy, and more delightful. These were some of the outlines of our new year's sermon—How we get eyes to see Jesus—and how fresh sights make our eyes stronger. The eye-salve of his word and Spirit clears the mental organ, and enables it to behold more wonderful things than Adam saw in paradise. May the prospect brighten upon you; and the more beautiful it is, may he speak to your heart and say, “All this is yours.”

My friend—we proceeded thus: If this be your faith, now try it. The trial is God's way of improving it. Jesus being the author and the con-

tinuer of faith, he expects that we look up to him constantly for our

1. Safety; as 1 Peter i. 5. "We are kept," &c.

2. Growth; being alive by him, we grow by cleaving to him, as the branch to the vine, Eph. iv. 15. "But holding the truth in love," &c.

3. All spiritual blessings flow from him, Eph. i. 3. "Blessed be," &c.

4. All temporal blessings, holy use of troubles, burdens, wants, sickness, trust, as Isa. xxvii. 1, 2. and they will be profitable; and health, and money, and lands, and all good things in life shall be sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

5. Come what may—trust on, look to Jesus; and Rom. viii. 28. shall be infallible truth.

6. "But he may lose sight and be blind for ever." 1 Cor. i. 7, 8, 9. cannot be broken. He shall see the King in his beauty.

7. "But he may fall and be lost." O no. Christ's prayer, John xvii. is as effectual as ever. Heb. ii. 13.

8. "But he must die." Well, a dying man, looking to Jesus, may hear him say—"Fear not, I am with thee," Psalm xxiii. 4. He has a good warrant to be comforted as long as the breath is in his body—and then, "all these died in faith."

9. O what will this man find when he opens his eyes, and sees Jesus in his glory! The Lord the Spirit prepare us for that sight, and keep us looking to Jesus by faith, till we see him by sense! W. R.

LETTER II.

May 3, 1788.

My good Friend,—I am fully satisfied you do not forget the Master nor his servant. I please myself with thinking that you are living what I teach—and that our word for 1788, “Looking to Jesus,” is realized at ——. I believe he has opened your eyes. You do see him—a true Jesus, but not in all his glory. The object is too great for the eye of faith, and too bright when we come near it. But if you will humbly ask for some of his eye-salve, it will marvellously strengthen the nerves, insomuch that you may see him who is invisible—enough of him to win all your affections. Such sights bring applications. He is matchless beauty—and mine. He is all perfection, and I am perfect in him. The wonder of heaven, and soon I shall see him face to face. This hope makes studying the word, believing, growing up into him, very sweet and improving. Every fresh view of his heavenly person begets some conformity to him, and wishes for more.—So far I had written, when I found the glass must come: and I was not willing to send so much blank paper with it: therefore I kept it by me, till some favourable opportunity should let me go on with this “Looking to Jesus”—to a real, a believed in, a precious Jesus. So he is this May the 3d. I have been consulting one who was quite enraptured with his Lord’s beauty—who had seen him in his glory, and he gave me great encouragement to proceed in this divine study;

Or he said to me, "After twenty-three years' happy experience of what he is to me, besides the visions and revelations which I had of him in paradise, still I know him but in part; yet what I do know, has such a powerful influence upon my heart and life, that I am still pressing forward, and I will, God helping me, until I know, even as also I am known." O this was sweet advice. You cannot think what good it did me; for I found my case and the apostle's were much alike. I do, blessings on him, I do know my Jesus truly and savingly; yet it is but little. I am not satisfied with my attainments: more, far more remains to be known of this infinite object, and therefore it is not enjoyed. A sense of this keeps alive a constant appetite for fresh discoveries; and this hungering and thirsting is not in vain: it is the vigour of spiritual life in the kingdom of faith. The health of the soul is more seen in its desires than in its enjoyments; for we have flesh and blood, and they let us feel we are not at home. We have also many mighty and cunning enemies, who are always attacking and often robbing us of our sensible enjoyments; and yet faith can live and thrive amidst all, it can break through every obstacle that stands between it and its beloved; trusting to what God has promised, and waiting patiently for his fulfilling it. If he hide his favourable countenance—yea, if he appear as an enemy, the believer trusts and is not afraid. These are some of the workings of faith, by which its truth, its efficacy, and its blessedness appear. May the witness for Jesus keep them very strong upon our heart! It is his office, while we are absent from our dearest friend, to preserve long-

ings after him in our souls—warm breathings, (such as Psalm lxiii. throughout,) fervent desires, not to be satisfied till they get full enjoyment; and in this way the Holy Spirit glorifies the Saviour. What he manifests to us creates such an appetite for him, as only God-Jesus himself in glory can fill. All the grace we now get out of his fulness, is but a whet of what we hope to get out of the same fulness in glory. Now this is living and thriving faith. The more I have, the better I am; and you too, are better for my betterness. It makes me wish the best thing for you; although you do not always treat me as I could wish. You would do me a great favour to employ me more.

W. R.

LETTER III.

June 12, 1788.

My dear Friend,—Your last letter brought me down upon my knees. Poor W. I feel for you. I pray you may have a right use of this visitation. It can only be sanctified by the Spirit of God and prayer. May you meet it in faith, and improve it by patience. A child—a pleasant child—of fair hopes—I have lost such a one; and I well remember it gave me occasion to exercise all the grace I could get. I found an infinite fulness, and there is the same for you to go to. And now your children are growing up, they will make you very miserable, or else they will compel you to be daily learning, Heb. iv. 16. Read it. Meditate well upon it. Pray over it. It is a lesson of constant practice. If your

children live ; if they prosper ; if they go on in spiritual success, as well as temporal ; if they be sick ; if they should die : all will try your faith, and make you feel that your whole dependence for yourself and family is on the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Whatever may be the event of W.'s complaint, we know not. But our Lord has taught us to live in subjection to his holy will, whatever he may please to send. Mr. T. you are not to learn this at your time of day, in theory : but how to practise it is the point ; and therein most of us fail. We none of us carry our subjection so far as he warrants us. His rule is, " If any man be my disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." This carries the terms of discipleship very high. A man must deny all that he has, and is, as a child of Adam—himself—as being under the law, under sin, and under condemnation. No possible hope in himself. And then he takes up the cross, which was the instrument of death, and to which the curse of the broken law was annexed, and executed too, on Adam and all his descendants. He pleads guilty ; owns the sentence just ; carries about with him an abiding conviction, that he deserves the curse and death due to sin as his wages. He puts the life of Adam, what he lives in the flesh, upon the cross, and henceforward lives by the faith of the Son of God—really dead to all hopes, except what Christ is to him. It is a great trial to have your own son sick, it will be a greater if God should take him from you. But such a trial does not come up to our Lord's meaning. We call every thing that goes contrary to our will, a cross ;

but this is far short of the matter. Christ's disciple must not only deny the will of the flesh, but himself; not only all trust in the flesh, but life itself. If he has come aright to Christ, he has come with a halter about his neck; aye, and has it on still—owning, that the cross and curse due to sin, are due to him. He submits to the penalty; and, moreover, waits with faith and patience for the execution. It is thus the Spirit of God makes Christ his one hope—breaking off all connexion with Adam's world, and with the life we derive from Adam. He quickens us into Christ, and into Christ's world. This is a total resignation; not only the will, but the whole man is crucified with Christ. The greatest thing we have, life itself, is resigned to him. And thus the disciple is taught submission in all other things. It becomes easy then to say—aye, and to practise too—"Take away what thou pleasest, Lord; not my will, but thine be done!" Duties are all alike easy, trials all alike tolerable, when we meet them in the strength of Christ; but when we would do them, or bear any part of them ourselves, then we find our perfect weakness. A disciple feels his resistance, and lays the burden upon Christ, who says to him, "I will sustain thee." His almighty power fulfils his word. And through him, faith and patience do their perfect work. This is following Christ. May you at this time, and at all times, be one of his happy disciples—denying yourself, taking up your cross daily, and following the Lamb whithersoever he leads you.

It will not be unseasonable to remind you, that you cannot lay in a stock of grace, and thereby keep your

heart in any preparation to submit cheerfully to God's will, especially when it is much contrary to your own. No past experience can enable you to bear a present trial. You must have fresh grace for the moment, as you breathe, Isaiah xxvii. 3.; so is the spiritual life: it is not from yourself, any more than your animal life. We fetch both from without us. Your genial warmth is light in every part of solids and fluids, as electrical experiments demonstrate. And it is the action of the air, by which you breathe, and move, and have your being. The life and liveliness of your soul depend entirely on Christ, the light of life, and on the Holy Spirit, the breath of life; and you can only receive, and can only enjoy these influences from Christ and the Spirit, as you are living every moment by faith. This is the holy art of believing: by it a beggar is enriched; a sinner pardoned; the weak, strong in the Lord; the miserable blessed; the dying disciple lives for ever. May you practise this holy art, and become the happiest believers in the island. W. R.

LETTER IV.

Aug. 13, 1781.

My dear Friend,—I have not been at all well since I left you: a giddiness follows me constantly, and sometimes I am ready to fall. I am aware of the consequences, and, thank God, I have nothing to fear, come what may. Nay, though it be a fair warning that the house is growing ruinous, yet I have a prospect of another building—a house of Em-

manuel's making—out of the reach of death and misery—fit for Emmanuel's land, which is a country, far, far better than paradise. It is made so to me by free gift, the grant accepted by faith, and the earnest of the Spirit enjoyed. In the grant is death—a covenant mercy—by which we receive all covenant blessings. And for all in hand and in promise, I am kept looking to Jesus. I am afraid to say much of myself, lest I should fall into a mistake, which I have often noticed and blamed in Mrs. Rowe, that she talked too much in raptures, and shoot too high, far above common Christians' heads. However, let him have his glory. He won the crown, let him wear it. Keep him in sight in all his gifts, in all his graces—every thing will then go well. This is my old lesson, and my new lesson daily. Pray, I charge you to pray, for W. R.

LETTER V.

Blackfriars, Nov. 8, 1788.

I OWE you for a very friendly note ; the contents were all matter of praise.—How thankful should you feel, how humbly should you walk, under a sense of such mercies ! And even for this, there is an ample provision made. Grace, from which all good comes, is ready to make you truly thankful, and to keep you humble ; and if you use ever so much grace to increase humble thankfulness, yet always remember the character of our Jesus, He giveth more grace.

I got no further yesterday—called off by business, visits, &c.—Saturday morning. I am looking at

that most blessed Giver of more. He is like the sun which is never weary of sending out more light: nor is our Sun of sending out more grace—fresh—always adding—more in quantity, more in quality—better and better, and the last the best—even eternal grace—the crown of all. Mr. T. I tell you a great secret; and it is all I have learned in a very long experience. By putting this word to every thing, it makes a miraculous change; it really turns evil into good. Misery with grace can feel happy—pain is sweet—gracious poverty makes rich—a weak believer, out of weakness, becomes strong—weak in himself, therefore strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Nay, no dispensation can hurt, where grace is exercised: indeed nothing can hurt, not even sin itself; for where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, &c. Rom. v. 20, 21. Read these two verses, and St. Paul's comment upon them, Ephesians, chap. i. and ii. and then tell me, whether the grace of our Jesus ought not to have, and from me it shall have, constant use and employment, as long as I have any being? May you and yours do the same, and then you will find showers of blessings coming down daily upon you.

All was good in your letter, except what related to Mrs. K.; and even that, put grace to it, will also be good. Grace can extract much spiritual health out of bodily sickness. I hope and pray she may be better for her present complaint, and find under it grace sufficient to make her say, from her heart, and her good man to join her, "Thy will be done!" But mind, this must be present grace, received moment after moment, out of the fulness of the God-man. We have no stock in hand: and when faith

lives as it should do, it finds the benefit of receiving all, just as it is wanted, even fresh grace to thank Jesus for his grace. W. R.

LETTER VI.

Dec. 20, 1788.

MR. T.,—Mrs. K. is sick; yet her sickness is not unto death. O what a mercy that her soul is alive—to God—in Christ. United to him, she is one with the fountain of life, and cannot be cut off: see John xi. 25, 26. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. May her partner, and all the family, knowing what it is to be in the Lord, when they sorrow, yet sorrow not as others who have no hope.

You seem to be much affected with the complexion of the times. So am I: and your support is mine also. The Lord reigneth; the Lord Jesus—and blessed are all they who put their trust in him. His subjects have nothing to fear in the worst of times: for their King is almighty; almighty to save them from all their sins: almighty to save them from all their miseries—almighty to give them all spiritual blessings—yea, almighty to command the blessing, even life for evermore. O what a King is this! O what subjects are these! Who is a God like unto thee God-Jesus, who pardoneth rebels, and maketh them kings and priests unto God and the Father; and then adviseth them to sit down with thee upon thy throne of glory! The Lord reigneth in his kingdom of grace, by his word and by his Spirit, conquering rebels daily, and making them his willing

subjects, till they be all brought safe to the kingdom of his glory. Now, what makes these blessed views of Jesus, the King of kings, so quieting and comforting to my heart is, that he is my King. This crowns all. He is my Almighty Saviour—my Blessor—my Keeper. His providence is over me for good; and he says to me, “Lest any hurt thee, I will keep thee night and day.” And as to what concerns life and godliness, he says, “Cast all thy care upon me, for I care for thee.” Jesus, Lord, I believe thee—the government is upon thy shoulders—under thy protection I am safe and happy. I know thou canst get thyself honour and renown in the darkest days, and the most stormy weather. Let the tempest rage ever so much, my pilot is almighty. He says to the winds, “Be still,” and to the waves, “Cease,” and the stormy winds and water fulfil his word.

Mr. T. here is my rest. I use means as well as you. I am at my prayers. But Jesus is my only hope. The present prospect may appear to you very dark—a black cloud gathering—you fear what may come, when it bursts in all its vengeance. My good Sir, this is the time for faith, to exercise it—aye, to improve it. What of fair weather, and sunshining faith? How can one tell whether it be true or genuine? But to put to sea in our little boat in the midst of a storm, the waves dashing over our heads, and threatening to swallow us up every moment: then to be able to say and feel, My Christ is with me in the boat, therefore I will trust and not be afraid. This is the proper working of the faith of God’s elect. For thus the command runs, “Trust

ye in Jehovah for ever “— because in *Jah*, Jehovah, is everlasting strength.” Let brother K. turn to his Hebrew Bible, and tell you why I thus render the text.

I have been so much pleased with your thought, “The Lord reigneth,” that if God spare life and health, I will preach upon it New Years’ day, and make it my watch-word for the year 1789, giving the character of the person of the King—of the nature of his government, and what a peculiar sort of people his subjects are—saved, pardoned, justified, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ—how they live, and how they die—and how they live to die no more. Pray for me, that I may be so enabled to set forth his praises, that he may be glorified in me and by me, then and for ever. W. R.

LETTER VII.

Jan. 10, 1789.

SATURDAY morning. It is so cold, I can scarce hold my pen; but I cannot help writing to you my present thoughts. Pardon failings, as it is written, “Have fervent love among yourselves, for this love shall cover the multitude of offences,” 1 Pet. iv. 8. I expected daily to hear of Mrs. K. and I thank God for her. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord: for they lived in him by his Spirit, the Spirit of life, who had given them faith to receive Christ, by which they were united to him, and had grown up as members under him their Head; living upon him as well as by him. O blessed life! for it is out of

the reach of death; as Jesus said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, although he had been dead, yet shall be made alive; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die: believest thou this?" So says he to you: he speaks what is as true to-day as it was then. Believe him, and dry up your tears. Mourn not as they do who have no such hope. Mrs. K. was in the Lord. She is in him now. She is with him now. And like him—like that standard of all perfection. Upon the ground of this faith, you ought to have a family meeting, and join in thanksgiving to our dearest Jesus that he has vouchsafed to admit one of you to his presence, and into his glory: and then to improve the providence in prayer, that God would make you all ready. You will soon follow her—sooner than some of you think. Take warning. You have nothing to do here that signifies any thing, but to prepare for death. God help you to live by faith, that the next of you who goes after her may be found in the Lord, and may live with him for ever.

Mrs. T. we have been at prayers for you: the best thing we can do. I know well the tenderness of your heart, and how you have felt your present loss. I believe you go for comfort where I would have you. He who has won your heart, is waiting to be gracious to you. He can supply with his presence your sister's absence. Whatever good you had from her was his gift, and now he takes it away; he can make up your temporal loss abundantly by his spiritual blessings. May you live near to him, and make so much use of him at this time, that you

may now find him a precious Jesus: for "Blessed are all they who put their trust in him." You know this well as a truth, but I wish you to feel its power. May you enjoy the presence and the love of our matchless Jesus, which is blessedness in the supreme. May he whisper to your heart, "I have made your sister as happy as my almighty love can. Wait a little, and I will do as much for you."

Mr. K. I trust we have one spirit, and feel as brethren for one another. I am sure I do for you. Where to go, and how to go for comfort, you know as well as I—even to the God of all comfort. He, and he alone, can give it you at this time. We, your friends, can only pray that you may make good use of, and receive much profit from, your present dispensation. You are sensible, that wisdom to do this must come from above; and it is such a wisdom as produces miraculous effects to this, as truly as in the day when James wrote, James i. 1—6. *Probatum est.*

Miss K. weep not as those who have no hope. I am praying for grace to teach you submission to the will of our Lord. She was your mother, but remember how she lived, how she died, and where she is now. Dry up your tears. You have work to do for the Lord. You are to fill up for a time your mother's place in the family. May my God give you grace, and prudence, and diligence, carefully to follow her steps.

W. R.

LETTER VIII.

April 27, 1789.

I CONGRATULATE you on our late national mercies, which all the people have felt—those of the world in their way—and we in ours, in prayer and in praise, bringing God into our joys, and looking up to him, that he would give us fresh reason to rejoice in his holy name. I believe you and I are in unison—and perhaps I may strike an octave—the touching upon my joy may affect and increase yours. Never was I more disappointed, nor more agreeably, than on the 23d. I expected to be left alone, and to preach to stone walls; but behold, we had a full church, and a blessed congregation of serious worshippers. Our subject was the 122d Psalm, a short paraphrase on it, with reasonable applications. As I take no notes, I can only give you some of the outlines. May they warm your heart as much as they did mine: for I had some of the prophet's joy, which he felt when he said, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." They were going up to Jerusalem, as you know they did three times a-year. It was a pleasant occasion to the true worshippers, who had received the Holy Spirit, by whom they had living faith in Jesus, and thereby believed and enjoyed the Father's love in him. They went up to the festivals to confirm and to increase their joy; for they knew well that the temple was the type of Christ's body, and all the public services there had relation to him. When they said, "Our feet shall

stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem," they then felt that true joy and peace in believing, which any of us now feel in reading Rom. v. 1, 2.: for the very word *Jerusalem*, which means the inheritance of peace, led them to look up to him who only is our peace, who only makes us heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. See Gal. iv. 22. to the end. Heb. xii. 22. Rev. xxi. throughout. And when they came to Jerusalem, how did it add to their joy! ver. 3. All worshipping in one place, one object, one faith, and one uniformity of rites and services: ver. 4. When the tribes went up, even the tribes of the Lord, they had the same testimonies, that is, ordinances, as we have, all referring directly to the Messiah—the temple, its vessels, the holy place, the most holy, preached Christ as plainly as I can: for "they went up to give thanks unto the name Jehovah:" he was a person—the name Jehovah, as Exod. xxiii. 21. Isa. xxx. 27. that person who was to be God incarnate, Jehovah Jesus, through whom prayer, praise, duties, all we do, is made acceptable, and through him only. In this faith, wherever a Jew was, when he prayed, he turned his face towards the temple, acknowledging that the God, worshipped at Jerusalem, was his God. In this view, they might well rejoice when they went up with one heart, and one voice, to bless the name Jehovah: because to him they ascribe, as in ver. 5. their civil, as well as religious prosperity. Under him they enjoyed full security for life and property. A good government, according to the word of God, is a great mercy. This they enjoyed: they had a King sitting on the throne of judgment, ruling in the fear of God. Sensible of their blessings, and

thankful for them, they exhort one another : ver. 6. “ O pray for the peace of Jerusalem—our church and state.” They love Christ who pray so ; who feel for their brethren and their prosperity, and who know and value the house of the Lord our God, they will be much in prayer for the continuance of these inestimable blessings.

These meditations brought us home to England ; and to inquire, whether we had not as much reason to rejoice to-day, as they ever had on any festival at Jerusalem. We have the same religious, the same civil mercies as they had ; and we come behind them in nothing, unless we fail to-day, in our national praises : for our privileges are uncommonly great, and call for singular acknowledgments. We have religion in its purity, God’s word in our hands, men sent of God to open and to explain it, and they are owned of him in their labours. No where in the world is the gospel in its truth, and in its power, as it is with us. O what rich incense of praise should go up to the throne of grace from us this day ! O what superlative thankfulness do these favours of God require of British believers, of you, and me ! The gospel runs and is glorified, and yet the times are quiet. The government is on the side of our most holy faith. Our king, God bless him, is himself a defender of it. May he, by whom kings reign, look down upon him with a gracious eye this day. When he prostrates himself before his God, may the great Angel of the covenant take his prayers and praises, and perfume them with much of his heavenly incense. Lord God speak to his heart, and let him feel some of that joy and peace which surpass all understanding.

You can easily add what came in here concerning the day. It was only to call upon the people to thank the Lord our God, and to give him the glory due unto his great name, for public mercies, family mercies, personal mercies. How high ought our praises to rise ! Sinners, as we are, helpless, unworthy ; yea, unthankful and unprofitable. O what a God have we to deal with, who loadeth such creatures with such benefits ! What a mercy that such poor thanks, and these his own gifts of grace, should be accepted at our hands ! Holy Ghost assist us in our prayers ; help our infirmities in our praises ; and teach us, with increasing gratitude, to adore the Son for his salvation, and to worship the Father for his love in Jesus. To the eternal Three, be eternal praise.

W. R.

LETTER IX.

Blackfriars, Nov. 11, 1789.

MY dear Friend,—I sit down as your monitor, to thank our Physician that you all keep so well, and that I hear Mrs. D. is a great deal better. If you would follow his recipes, all would mend. He prescribes one simple remedy, and that infallibly cures all diseases. Only believe. All that ever tried it, found its virtue never fail ; no, not when life itself failed : the experience of every age has set its seal—*Probatum est.* And yet we have among us many pretenders to skill, who cry it down as a quack nostrum. Our learned doctors have shut it out of the new London and Birmingham dispensaries, And

they treat us as rank enthusiasts, who try to keep it still in practice. You know, Sir, as well as I, what the great men of the day think of Jesus Christ, and of his remedy: but their opinion does not hurt you or me. We trust to matter of fact. A wounded conscience set at peace—a broken heart healed—a miserable sinner made happy—a dying sinner rejoicing in the prospect of death. Millions of such who now see his face, and we who now feel his virtue, are witnesses of his almighty power, and that he still saveth freely by grace through faith. To this truth I set my hand and seal, this eleventh day of November, A. D. 1789. It is all my salvation, and, God be thanked, it is all my desire. You have my living and dying testimony in a volume of sermons, which I have revised and just published. You will please to accept them as a token of brotherly love; and when you read them, may you feel real fellowship with your divine Jesus; as much, more if it please him, than he has most graciously vouchsafed unto me. Perhaps I may seem too warm (a little enthusiastic) in speaking of this happiness to some. Even believers are too apt to rest in the truth: but is it not therefore received that it may produce its proper effects? Such as, great joy and peace in believing,—the unsearchable riches of Christ. What are they, if nobody is to be enriched out of his treasury? “Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty.” Yes, I have had a glimpse of him, and I long to see more of his matchless charms. He hath promised—“They shall hear my words, for they are sweet.” Yes, Lord, I hear the joyful sound, and it is heavenly melody in my ears. “Thy name is as

ointment poured forth." I feel its perfume, the smell of thine ointment is to me much better than all spices. "Come taste and see how gracious the Lord is." I have come, Lord, and thy fruit is indeed sweet unto my taste. "As many as touched him were made perfectly whole." Glory be to him who enables us still to handle the word of life. These are the five senses of the spiritual man; and each of them finds in Christ the proper exercise of its faculty. The bodily senses take in all the objects of nature; the spiritual senses take in all the fulness of Christ: and in him they have their employment, and will have their happiness for ever. The belief of this, and some enjoyment of it, makes me wish that I myself, and you my Christian friends, may have our senses more exercised in our own proper world, that we may get faster hold of Christ, may find him more precious, and every day may be growing up into him, and that in all things. You have great reason to pray for

W. R.

LETTER X.

My very good Friend,—You know our custom—We begin the year always with a motto. Ours for 1790 is—"Trust in him at all times." A year of especial faith. I would have it famous for believing—our bodies, and souls, and families, the church, the state, at home, abroad, call for much trust in our God. The word "trust" means to lean upon any thing which you think will support you; and you will do it with more or less confidence, as you are

persuaded it is able to keep you from falling. This is a beautiful idea of faith, as it respects the word of God—our ground to lean upon. What has he said in his promise of salvation, and what security have I in leaning upon it, that I shall be a saved sinner? You have the word of truth which cannot lie—the promise of a faithful God, who keepeth his promise for ever—his covenant, secured by the oath of the eternal Three, and all these guaranteed by the name which the Trinity have taken, namely, to be Alehim, engaged upon oath to be on the side of his people, their sworn allies, to defend them from all evil, and to give them all-good in earth and in heaven. Notwithstanding the foundation of our faith is thus immutably laid, so as to render unbelief without excuse; yet so it is, that they only believe to whom it is given. The Holy Spirit alone can convince of sin, its guilt, its danger—how near the poor creature is to death and hell; he makes the conviction felt and effectual, and the man is in earnest to flee from the wrath to come. Then the divine warrant, and the command to believe gain credit, and the truth of the promise is received, and thereby the blessing in the promise comes to be enjoyed. He is made to see, that he has good ground to lean upon God's word; and he finds it safe, trusting to such evidence; and thereby he experiences how blessed they are who put their trust in such a God, as Psalm ii. 12.; because there is great joy and peace in believing.

It may be done safely, it may be done happily, at all times. What more can be said to recommend this leaning upon God's word? No case so desperate, of sin and misery, but the word reaches it with

a promise; and faith mixed with the promise brings deliverance from all sin, Rom. viii. 1, 2, 3. from all misery—if it continues, it does good, Rom. viii. 28. and in the best time, a happy issue, as Zech. xiii. 9. O what a blessing is there in this passage of Zechariah! You have been tried lately in this fire, and you will again, and soon. Read it over and over, digest it, you will find it a sovereign cordial in an hour of need. God give you to see it in my light, and to get all the nourishment out of it of which it is full. Is it so then, that no guilt, no trouble, should hinder a man from trusting in God? nay more, if these be the special times of trusting, let us consider what encouragement we have to make this year famous for believing, come what may.

First, for salvation, as ver. 7. Fallen man is under the law, under sin, therefore dying and without any help or hope in himself; for there is salvation in no other than Jesus Christ. But whenever any one believes in Jesus, he is saved freely by grace. The law no longer condemns, the lawgiver justifies. All iniquities are freely forgiven, and the peace of God rules (should rule) in the conscience always, and by all means. Death is changed into life, as John xi. 25, 26. even a life that cannot die.

Secondly, O what a glorious subject of rejoicing is here! called, ver. 7. *glory*—God himself is our salvation. Here faith may triumph all the year. A paraphrase on Isaiah, chap. xii. especially on ver. 3. rendered *well*; but Mr. K. can tell you that it is the *fountain* of salvation, which cannot, like a *well*, be drawn dry.

As salvation is for sinners, joy for the miserable,

so the next word, ver. 7. *strength*, is suited to the weak. The weakest believer has an almighty arm to lean upon in every trial, trouble, or temptation: he cannot fall, unless his faith fails. A paraphrase on that sweet hymn, Isa. xxvi. 1, 2, &c. and on that blessed experience recorded, 2 Cor. xii. 7—10. Strong in faith, strong in all. Thus, for all the possible events of the year, we have, as ver. 7. God for our refuge, in the most desperate case that can be. Our Jesus is able to save to the uttermost: you may cast safely all your sins, and all your cares, upon God-Jesus. His almighty power is with you, and for you. He said once, and blessings on him, we find it true to this day, "Fear not: I am thy shield; and thy exceeding great reward." Who can tell the full meaning of this promise? However, leaning upon it, we may go with confidence through all the troubles of life, yea, through the valley of the shadow of death, and fear no evil.

O what a year would this be, if we could always bring these principles into practice, without doubt or wavering! For you see, that in all cases, in all times, we are commanded to trust God in Christ; and in trusting we shall find, 1. Salvation; 2. The joys of it; and, 3. The security of it: the Lord's strength being our keeper, and our sure refuge in life and death, from all possible evil.

These are some of our encouragements to set out in this new year with fresh spirits, that we may hold out, and go on from faith to faith. There is no temptation, enemy, danger, or corruption, which should stop us. Nay, these are so many motives for depending on God's promised help; so that neither

what we feel within, nor fear without, should make us withdraw our confidence.

Then came the application,—1. To professors who have not faith. 2. To weak believers, who are so because they make not use of Christ's strength; for, under the teaching of his Spirit, the weakest is the strongest. And, 3. To sound believers. The motives from this Psalm—a paraphrase was given upon it—then desiring them to read it at home, to get it off by heart, that in the shop, in the closet, in the exchange, wherever they were, or whatever they were doing, they might live by the faith of the Son of God; so that it might be a most famous year for the increase of faith.

W. R.

LETTER XI.

May 3, 1790.

MY dear Friend,—You bind us to you with the sweet cords of love. I send you in return some of my good things, a word in season—which was our subject yesterday; and, if the Lord please to rain and shine upon it, you will taste some of the rich fruit of the tree of life, which groweth in the midst of the paradise of God. The words were Psalm lxxv. 10. “Thou blessest the springing thereof.” He is speaking of the beauty of this season, when nature revives from the dark dead winter, and the grass, and corn, and trees, grow and shoot forth. How verdant are the meadows—how flourishing the corn—what fair blossoms on the trees—promising us, through God's blessing, a fruitful year! Are we

only to look at this delightful scene, and is it all to end in admiration? Oh, no. A very important lesson is held forth, and made quite sensible. Nature in this, as in all other things, preaches and confirms the doctrines of grace—not by comparison or metaphor, but the God of nature so formed his works, that they should be standing records, outward and visible signs, to give us true ideas of spiritual objects. In the present case, we have a fine spring season: what is the cause of it? The earth itself is inert matter—acts only as acted upon. What pushes forward the grass, and corn, and trees? An unerring philosopher gives this account, 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. “He (Christ) shall be like the light of the morning, when the sun riseth; even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springeth out of the earth by clear shining after rain.” Here has been a fine shower; after it, the sun rises without a cloud, and this makes the grass spring out of the earth: the clear shining thins, rarifies the rain, impels it into the tubes of the plant or tree, drives it along as sap and nourishment: so all things grow. Look at Deut. xxxiii. 12, &c. which is a philosophical description of vegetation—“How the light pushes forth the sap, and makes all the precious fruits of the earth to ripen.” This is the picture, created on purpose to give an idea of a spiritual spring. Christ is the light, his Spirit is the water of life—all men by nature are like winter, till Christ enlighten, and, by his Spirit, revive them. He breaks up their fallow ground, and fits it for the seed, which is the word of God. When the sower, who is the Son of man, puts his Spirit into the seed, then it has life, it grows, it bears fruit an hundred

fold, even fruit unto life everlasting. This answers a grand inquiry in the spiritual life: How shall I know that I have had a spring-time, and that any of the good seed has been sown in my heart? Answer, I feel I want it; my heart is fallow ground, and I wait on the sower, as Deut. xxxii. 2. "That he would put in the good seed, and give it the early and the latter rain."

But how shall I know that mine is really a true spring? By depending more on spiritual influences. Nothing grows in nature without rain and sunshine: so in grace, nothing grows without Christ and his Spirit. A conviction of this will lead to the experience of Isa. lviii. 11.

But I do not grow as I could wish: It is a great growth to feel this. I want more showers—O what am I when the influence of heaven is withdrawn! Then I feel my dependence—then I see it good to wait for the showers of heaven—then I expect gentle rain, dropping, that it may soak in, and come down like dew, unfelt, unseen, only in its blessed effects.

But how shall I be certain, that if I have a spring I have the blessing of God upon it? Truly, thanks be to the Son of man, I have got some of the harvest; I bless him for fulfilling Hosea xiv. 5—8. and I also rejoice in my God, the giver of my life, and of my liveliness. Psalm iv. 7. is my present state, and that most beautiful spring mentioned Canticles ii. 10—13. is what I am seeking and praying for. I wish I had room to give you my ideas of that sublime description. Call upon me for it, if ever I see you; and I give it you under my hand, that

you shall know all that I know of it. The seed sown, growing, thriving, will ripen into a glorious harvest : great joy and peace in believing is the first-fruits. O how should they adore and worship him, who have the foretaste of that eternal spring. It will be the same there as here, only more perfect and more lasting. May the sun shine and the clouds drop down their influence upon Mr. and Mrs. —, upon my dear John, upon every branch of your family, that we may all feel his life, his liveliness, and our growth by him into life eternal. W. R.

LETTER XII.

My dear Friend,—At present I am busy about my Bible ; being suffered to live to read it over once more. Two things have occurred to me in the present perusal, in both which I am enabled to triumph. The one is, a deeper discovery of the horrible state I am in through sin ; so that, as a child of Adam, I feel nothing in myself but the working of corruption—by and under the law, dead to God ; but all are alive to sin—every faculty at work to bring it forth—the mind—the heart—the senses—yea, the very imagination, in prayer disturbing, distracting, quite lawless—I can do nothing but cry out, Rom. vii. 24. Reading verse 25. I get my second lesson, and find employment for my Jesus. A body of sin and death like mine, wants an almighty Saviour, and I am learning to put more honour upon his word and work daily. I find more need of him than ever, and it is some true joy that he is most

exactly suited to my desperate case; having no hope but in his blood, not one ray but in his righteousness, no strength but in his arm, no happiness but out of his fulness; I am led even to triumph in what he is to me; I would lay myself at his feet, and would bless his dear name that he is become all my salvation, and glory in him that he is now all my desire. It is the best reading that ever I had: *self* was never so brought down, and so crucified daily; nor did I ever see so much reason to magnify the person of God-Jesus. In this spiritual crucifixion of self and sin—in this true growing up out of self into Christ—may the Holy Spirit teach you to profit daily. Pray for yours, in our common Lord,

W. R.

LETTER XIII.

Nov. 10, 1790.

Mr. and Mrs. T.,—I am told it is a good thing to be giving of thanks: because it is the right improvement of past mercies, and the best way to secure a rich supply for the future. It keeps the eye where it should be, fixed upon the fulness of Jesus. He gave—he continues to give—and he will continue. All come from him. A mercy—the feeling it a mercy—and the praising him for it,—this is grace for grace. It is his way, yea, his delight to give thus liberally, when he gets all the glory of his gifts. In this holy merchandise, you may be as rich as you will. My friends, he will withhold no favour from you, if you carry him back all his praise. Receiving his gifts, and thanking him for them, is the

true spirit of the gospel, and is the practical improvement of it both in earth and in heaven. This is my lesson for the year 1790. I have just finished another reading of my Bible, and, as I told you, my profiting has been in a deeper discovery of the exceeding wickedness of sin, and of mine own heart-sin, deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. If I had been only in the school of Moses to learn, I should, with such views of sin, have hanged myself long ago; but in the school of Christ, his Spirit enables us to feel daily more of the mystery of iniquity, that we may have occasion to know more of, and to trust more in, that offering of Jesus which perfecteth for ever. Thus things go quite right when Christ is exalted, and self is brought down and kept down. This seems to bring our religion into a very little compass; but the practice of this one doctrine is universal, reaching to all times of life, and to all things in life—keeping us ever dependent on the Spirit of Christ to teach, and on his power to enable us to live out of self upon the fulness of God our Saviour. Mr. ———, he can make you a better scholar than I am; for which blessing, may my prayer be heard for you in the full sense of the promise—“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

W. R.

LETTER XIV.

May 5, 1792.

MY dear Friend,—I thank you for the good account you send me of my Doctor. I knew he would

not fail you. Thanks be to him for blessing the means for Mrs. T.'s recovery. I hope for his farther help. He can still do greater things; for he does nothing by halves: all his words and works are like himself, perfect. If he undertake, he will infallibly complete the cure. So we read of his patients, however desperate their cases they were all made perfectly whole. His hand is not shortened. He can remove every spiritual disease, and restore present and eternal health. Such miracles are not ceased. More faith in him would multiply them in number; more faith would increase them in experience; more faith would then bring him more praise: for thus we read of a healed sinner: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all within me bless his holy name: bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases." By this spiritual health he works a wonderful effect upon the body: it is better than any medicine, not for keeping off diseases, but for bringing in the supports of patience, and the comforts of faith; by which a man, even in bodily pain, can be kept happy in his soul; yea, so happy, as scarce to feel the pain for the greatness of his inward joy. Thus speaks the word:—"My brethren, count it all joy, when ye fall into divers trials." And the noble army of martyrs confirmed the word: they met death rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer for their precious Jesus. I want Mrs. T. to come from Bath perfectly cured, as well as he thinks proper, in her body, but in the highest health that can be, in her soul. She knows a good deal of his fame; but a great deal more re-

mains to be known. He is not only a most wonderful Physician for healing all the diseases of sin, but also for giving his patients every faculty which can fit them to receive and to enjoy the blessings of spiritual health. O what a Jesus—what a Jesus! he creates ears to hear the words of eternal life, eyes to see the King in his beauty, and to be enamoured with his matchless charms. And then to taste and see, what a most sweet Jesus he is—O what a fragrancy! When the gospel recommends his love, and the Spirit makes his name like the sweetest ointment poured forth, then the believer can, with his hands, handle the word of life—he hears, and sees, and tastes, and smells, and feels, that his beloved is infinitely more than all other beloveds. Thus he gives spiritual senses, and spiritual enjoyments to the inward man, and come what may to the outward, he maintains joy and peace in believing, which the world cannot take away. O that you and Mrs. T. may go away from Bath admiring and adoring his wonder-working love, healed in body, healed in soul, happy in both. You never, never can trust him enough, nor praise him as he deserves. His name alone is excellent, and his praise above heaven and earth. May he become dearer to you every day: so he will, if you use him more. Let him be your companion in your journey. Take him to——. Make much of him—be intimate with him in your own room. Go not to W. without him. Do nothing without him. Living by faith upon him at all times, and for all things, whatever you take in hand shall prosper. He will bless your substance, your table, your children, your bed, your servants: he will

load you with his benefits, and he will do you good all the days of your life; and when they come to an end, he will give you to depart in peace. After that, he will do greater things than I can tell you. My prayers, my letters, my life, are directed to him, that he would vouchsafe to make me any way instrumental in recommending him to you; that you, and Mrs. T. brother K. and all his and yours, may grow in grace, and in the knowledge and love of our dearest Jesus.

W. R.

LETTER XV.

Nov. 14, 1792.

I AM very thankful for your account of brother K.'s sermon. There is great need of such sound doctrine, and also of much prayer to our God that he would be pleased to bless it; for the times are very feverish: but he can, and he only can, cool and quiet the inflamed spirits; and he only can keep us from the infection. I am therefore of his party, and of no other: and though we be but a little army, yet we shall prove in the end the strongest side: yea, come what may upon this distracted world, he will keep us safe from all evil. The persuasion of this makes us love him—gives us a zeal for his glory—and a holy sympathy with believers, and for unbelievers. In all which I have received great confirmation from Ezek. ix. in which I find a fixed purpose to destroy the city, for the abominations committed by priests and people—the execution is ordered, and the destroyers have their commission; but they

are not suffered to act, till the Lord Christ sets his mark upon his own people, of whom not one was to be hurt. They were his sealed—his Spirit had set on them the seal, and faith received the impression. Their character as believers is beautifully drawn, ver. 4. They were humbled, and mourning for unhumbled sinners, and crying and praying to the Lord for mercy, for themselves, and for a guilty land. In their number may I be found, and herein exercising my whole system of Christian politics—grieved for my Lord's glory, grieved for those who rob him of it, and praying earnestly to him, that he would grant them repentance unto life; blessing at the same time his dear name for the distinguishing mark of his love, that he has enabled me to set to my seal that God is true. O my friend, we are as bad, as ripe for destruction, as Jerusalem was; we have great reason to mourn before the Lord, and to pray that he would spare this guilty land. Whatever he is going to do with us in the way of judgment, I know not; but I have infinite reason to thank him, that the destroying angel cannot hurt one on whom is the mark. I verily believe, without doubting, that he has sealed you also for his own; and I can see the impression very legible on Mrs. T. May the Spirit who made it, render it every day more plain and more practical, especially by the blessed fruits mentioned ver. 4. of the holy mourners: that they may abound in a great harvest at ———, is the hearty prayer of
W. R.

LETTER XVI.

Dec. 1, 1792.

My dear Friend, ——— so much for this affair: now for another; in which more than you and me are concerned.—I fear children yet unborn. It is the evil, infinite evil, everlasting evil of sin; on which all the charges are to be laid of national, public, family, and personal suffering. God is angry at nothing but sin; his wrath against it is revealed from heaven, all sin, my sin. It is charged upon me; and I have fled to the city of refuge—sheltered by the sprinkled blood, and by the mighty arm of my Jesus. When I live most upon him, he teaches me the true humbling of heart, for myself; and seeing from what he has saved me, my bowels melt over the sins and sufferings of others. Then he makes me plead with him for my fellow-sinners, and very thankful, more than I am, or can be, for myself. This is the only concern I have with the times. He is ruling by his providence, punishing sin, and warning sinners to take heed now he has his iron rod in his hand. O spare Great Britain! Lord spare us; and give not thine heritage over to confusion. I have a long catalogue of national sins to pray over: as long as the prophet had, Ezek. ix. and I hope with some of his faith. I told you before, what a great honour it is to be among those holy mourners on whom God had set his mark; for they were not to be touched by the destroyer. How precious is that chapter to me in these times! What full security does it give

believers, that God will take special care of them, whatever destruction he may send upon unbelievers. I pray him to set his mark upon you, that is, faith; that when men's hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth, you may not be afraid of any evil tidings, but your heart may be established, trusting in the Lord. The God of peace grant you peace always, and by all means: so prays, most cordially,
W. R.

LETTER XVII.

Feb. 2, 1793.

My friend Mr. T.—Mr. N. told me you was expected in town; but I hear nothing of your arrival, and therefore I send my messenger to inquire how you all do. Busy you are, I know, and to some purpose. As far as I can help you on, that this great hurry may not stop you, either in the seeking, or in the enjoying of the best of things, I am in my watch-tower, looking up to the keeper of Israel for you and yours, for the public prosperity, for our king; and above all, that our Lord would be pleased to revive his work in our land and day. This is much upon my heart, and keeps me watchful and waiting for what the Lord will answer. As his interpreter, reading his will in his present dispensations, I am to plead in his name for sinners, and to give them warning. He is angry at nothing but sin, and his anger has broke out. His arm is lifted up to strike, and his glittering sword has given a fearful

blow, as you may read, Ezek. xxi. from ver. 8—18. and yet it has more to slay before it be put up into the scabbard. No repentance yet, no turning to him who smiteth them. I see daily greater necessity for keeping in my watch-tower; as it is my office to be found waiting upon God, humbled for my own sins, and praying and pleading for those who cannot read his present judgments against sin, and against the greatest of all sins—unbelief. In times as bad as the present, Habakkuk prayed, and kept on praying in his watch-tower, until he got a gracious hearing and a favourable answer. A good example for all who follow the steps of his faith, humbling themselves before God for sin, they will find his mercy for themselves, and it may be such a gracious answer as he obtained. This is my present office, in which I am now waiting—in which I hope to meet you often, as a Christian, a minister, a subject. I go no farther in politics, than to be found in that blessed exercise of the prayer of faith, described in Psalm cxxii. paraphrased from beginning to end in our sermon, Jan. 30. when one of my parish left thirty shillings for the minister, to recommend “brotherly love and charity,” a far better subject than Whig or Tory.

W. R.

LETTER XVIII.

March 6, 1795.

MR. and Mrs. T.,—You are one, therefore I put you together in my letter of thanks, for a very kind and friendly acknowledgment in your last, for

the present of the 'Triumph of Faith.' I wish I could give you the grace as well as the book: but it is an inestimable gift, and in better hands than mine. One is the Author and the Finisher, and with him I am pleading for the increase of faith in both your hearts. The more he gives you, your appetite will increase, and you will wait in the means of his appointing for daily growth. With this waiting faith I hope I am getting on: and, as I am nearer every moment to the end of my faith, I thank my God that he vouchsafes me very comfortable and believing views of what lies before me; and I doubt not but he will make me a dying witness for Jesus and his love. Do not cease to recommend me to his mercy, as I trust he will enable me to plead for you to the last.

I have received a very obliging letter from brother K. for which I own myself indebted to him; and am repaying him as fast as I can with my prayers, both for himself and for his congregation. If he has good times in his pulpit work, and sinners hear and repent; and if his church members grow in number and grace, I am helping him as my Lord enables me; and with him I am more earnest, because we live now in troublesome times, when a refuge from the storm, and a sure covert from danger, should be much sought after and highly valued.

My love particularly to Mrs. T. and I hope she has some of the experience, as well as the knowledge, of the great doctrines in which the Christian triumphs. Because of her stomach's sake, and her often infirmities, I wish her spirits may be kept up by the reviving cordials of the gospel, and she may never want joy, great joy and peace in believing.



My God be with you, a very precious Jesus to
 parents, children, Miss H. K., &c. &c. So prays,
 W. R.

LETTER XIX.

Dec. 12, 1782.

My good Friend,—I have read in a certain book
 —“As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news
 from a far country.” You know this is the gospel.
 Many, thank God, very many times it has been good
 news to you and me. And while the blessed sound
 is joyful in our hearts, it makes all other good news
 better. So it improved your letter. I received it
 as one of my covenant blessings. You have your
 thanks; and God has had his. I am certain you
 will not be offended that he had the first and best.
 The contents of the letter were also every one of
 them cordials—“as a cup of cold water to a thirsty
 soul.” What struck me first, was your noble col-
 lection.* Indeed it was great, in itself valuable, but
 more so from the motive: I believe Mr. ——— gives,
 and teaches to give from faith. Christian charity
 springs from Christ received—works by Christ’s
 grace—expects acceptance through Christ’s inter-
 cession, and done ever so much, or ever so well, re-
 fers all to Christ’s glory. So again I come to my
 point. The good minister and the good congrega-
 tion have my warmest thanks, but to the Lord Christ
 be all their praise. Please to communicate this to

* For the Bible Society.

Mr. K. and farther inform him, how much he and his congregation are laid in my heart since I have fully discovered the present state of ———. O what deplorable blindness is there in ministers and people! What a fearful opposition are they carrying on against the Lord and his Christ! What have I told them, what had Mr. ——— to tell them, but of the almighty power; of the infinite wisdom as influenced by the sovereign love of God-Jesus, to save all that come to him; to save them from all their sins, and from all their miseries, and also to give them all possible good in earth and in heaven? This is the kindest message of the gospel, and it is sweetly recommended by putting the sinner into the present enjoyment of salvation, as the sure earnest of eternal enjoyment. Mr. ——— says, "This shall not be preached in my pulpit, because my congregation are offended at it." Lord God, open their eyes! In this view, Mr. ———, you see the important stand which your brother ought to make. The good news shall not be suffered to be proclaimed in churches. Not even Mr. ———, among his friends and relations, shall enter the pulpit. In such circumstances surely very much depends upon Mr. ———. How earnest should he be in his work! How faithful in preaching! How careful in his walk! How fervent in closet prayer! How constantly dependent on Christ for the success of his ministry! May the Spirit of the living God keep him—his eye single—his heart chaste—his whole soul engaged in magnifying the person and the work of God our Saviour. I shall be often remembering him and you when I am at court. The King of kings is extremely gracious to

me, and admits me into his presence, and sometimes into his cabinet: when he vouchsafes me such a favourable audience, I will not fail to present a petition for poor S. Let me recommend it to you to do the same at your prayer-meetings. God bless them, and be much with you in that hour. May your pleadings for your ignorant neighbours bring down, both on them and on you, showers of blessings.

Your letter was like the aforesaid cordial, because it brought a welcome account of your family. We had been often saying, "I wonder we do not hear from ——. What can be the matter? I am afraid they are not all well." At last comes good news from your family and friends, for which I am very thankful. My blessed Master is very kind in taking care of you. He has followed you with loving-kindness all your days. And I pray him, I doubt not but he will, keep you to the end. I had another subject of thankfulness from your letters—they came just time enough to inform me of opening the brew-house. I was present on the occasion, and I am a witness it was consecrated in form. The trade thereof was dedicated to the Lord, and I trust he will have the whole management of it. Please to tell—that I shall continue my fervent prayers for their success. I hope our God will bless them in better things than these, and will give them the upper as well as the nether springs: and then my joy concerning them will be full.

When you have read thus far, you will begin to think that I write in good spirits—and yet I am under the rod, and it is a very sharp one. Mrs. —— called on Tuesday, and my wife could not see her;

indeed she has seen nobody since we heard the melancholy news of my son's death. It has been to us both a very heavy affliction. He was cut off by a violent flux at Trincomalee in the island of Ceylon. I feel as a parent; I am not a stone: but grace has got the better of nature. God supports. God comforts. I have a will of mine own; and by it I would have gladly kept my son; for he was a sweet youth. But I can, from my heart, say, "Not my will, Lord, but thine be done;" whereby I have the advantage of finding that my faith, being put into the furnace, is true gold. It is, glory be to grace, proved and improved. When I first saw the letter which brought us the account, I knew the general's seal to it, and, fearing the contents, I looked up for the presence and for the support of my good Master and my old Friend; and he answered me in the words of a great believer, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away." He has a right to do what he will with his own. Then he enabled me to reply, "Blessed be the name of the Lord;" and I do praise him for giving me some of Job's resignation, that I could use his words with the same spirit. My poor wife has exquisite feelings on this occasion. She wishes not to murmur, nor to displease our good Lord by any hard thoughts of him. But the tenderness of the parent, and to a child who never offended her in his life, occasions risings of grief. The spirit is willing to kiss the rod, but the flesh is weak. In the main, she behaves as I could wish. Her faith is supported. Her mind grows quiet and calm. And I doubt not but God will soon bring in his comforts, as well as supports.

W. R.

LETTER XX.

Bath, Sept. 22, 1783.

My dear Friend,—Our good Lord would not have you not to feel for your loss, but to mourn as one that hath hope. We cannot doubt but your mother is with the Lord. And though she had a legal heart to struggle with, and had legal connections which cherished a sort of staggering at the promises, yet she was in Christ. All is safe in his hand. I have heard her again and again commit herself into his keeping: and I am a witness, that her confidence was placed on the right object, on which God himself had commanded her to rest her soul. Sorrow not, therefore, so much for her, as to hinder your gratitude to God for his special kindness to her living and dying. You have lost a mother, a good mother, and I have lost a friend; but neither you nor I would wish her back again. Blessed be God, we are following her—very fast I am. Blessed be his holy name, he supported her faith to the last—so he will ours. Let us improve this providence, as much as we can, to be always ready—that living and dying we may be the Lord's. W. R.

LETTER XXI.

Friday Morning.

My dear Friend,—Although I have not time to write as I could wish, yet I could not neglect the

opportunity, if it was only to let you see that the doctrines of grace are not unfriendly to good works. Though, by the by, the first good work a man can do, is to receive them; and the next, and so on, is to make use of them. When I would tell you of my good works, it is not great I. O no. It is the sun that makes fruitfulness—so does my Sun, my light and my life. He enables me to wish to be like him; and to be doing what he did, and as he did it: on the same motive and to the same end. My love to you is truly his gift. And what if I should say I show proof of it, expecting nothing again? I take every occasion to mention you and yours to my gracious Lord, and he is pleased to hear me. The very privilege is its own blessedness. It will only receive some addition when friend T. shall say—I am doing the same for you and yours. I believe you are doing it. But do it more, and better, and get out of my debt as fast as you can. It will be a good while first: but if you will let me give you a hint, it may be improved for your sake and mine. Make a conscience of remembering me as often as you are going to ——. Pray one for another—so runs the command,—mind how faithful he is to his word. Daniel's three friends went to prayer—they besought God with him, to give Daniel the understanding of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and the interpretation: while they prayed, the answer came. In like manner, when Peter was in prison, and to be executed the next day, the church was at prayers all night for his deliverance; and while they were praying, Peter came and told them how God had delivered him. Peter spoke very feelingly afterwards,

when he said, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver them that are his." Indeed, Sir, I want your prayers. I ask them; I have some right to them; and I believe they will do me good. My blessing on all the children. Peace be with you. Amen.

W. R.

LETTER XXII.

Jan. 9, 1786.

MR. T.—I begin with thanks—Blessed be his name who has spared us another year, and is still magnifying his mercy to us and to ours. He is good and doeth good; for his mercy endureth for ever. And to whom? Who are the objects of his mercy? Wonderful to consider: all, all of them are rebels—and when pardoned; for their best services deserve nothing but hell: and yet he glorifies his grace in such—giving, increasing, multiplying his mercies, both to their bodies and souls; yea, he loadeth them with his benefits. My friend, take an estimate of them; you have leisure, more than you had at S. I am a bad accountant; but you are well acquainted with figures—try what you can do in casting up this sum—"What has God done for you? When did his purpose of doing you good begin? How many mercies have followed you all the days of your life? And when will they stop?" Psalm ciii. 17. I believe it will puzzle all your skill in arithmetic to give the sum total. A better man than you tried, but he failed; and he thought it his wisest part to end the trial with fresh praise, as you may read,

Psalm cvi. 1, 2. It is the right working of divine grace, to be willing to ascribe all to grace. And instead of getting out of debt by praises, we are more indebted for our praises, and should be more thankful for more thankfulness. When I have acknowledged your Christmas present, it is no payment. It is only saying, Mr. T. is very kind to his friends, and I am among them, much beholden to him. That with you is enough: so it is with our God. W. R.

LETTER XXIII.

Jan. 4, 1792.

MR. T.—We have taken our leave of the last year. Farewell 1791, thou wilt return no more. Welcome 1792. Our business now is, to try to profit from the past, and to improve the coming time. When a Christian looks back, every thing calls for his praise. And looking forward, every thing calls for prayer, the prayer of faith. On these subjects we employed ourselves on new-year's-day. You know it is one of my festivals. We had a great meeting; and, I trust, many true worshippers. Our motto for this year, and our employment through all our years, is, "Grow in grace," 1 Pet. iii. 18: Take the outlines. Grace means favour, free. In our present circumstances, it is the favour of God to the sinners of mankind; said to come from Jehovah, very, very gracious—from the Father, from the Son frequently, and from the Spirit of grace, to teach us, that in the blessed Trinity, all their purposes, words, and works are favour, nothing but real favour to

believers. To them who feel guilt and wrath in their consciences, it comes like a cool breeze after a sultry day; and it is also compared to dew, which, in hot countries, is very necessary to all the fruits of the earth, and comes upon them most freely, as you may see, Mic. v. 7.

Hence the necessity of it was shown. It is to the soul what breath is to the body. What the dew, and rain, and the shining of the heavens are to every thing that grows out of the earth; so is grace, as the apostle proves at large, Ephes. ii. And this leads us to consider the objects of grace, not so much in the purpose of the Trinity, as in the discovery of it. They are quickened by the Spirit of life, enabled to receive Jesus for their Saviour and their God, and then to live upon his fulness by faith, where they find all grace for spiritual life, growth, and activity; moment after moment, grace for grace.

To learn this lesson in practice, is the sound experience of a true believer—grace to pardon, as 1 Tim. i. 14.—grace to subdue sin—grace to purify the heart—grace to regulate the life; these, in use, are the exercise and the improvement of the grace of Jesus. He takes all from Christ as mere favour, and wishes to grow up into him in all things. May this prosper in your heart. God is teaching it you, as I observe from your last letter; and I see a legal turn in you that would pervert his teaching. Mr. T., the feeling of what you are should not keep you from Christ, but make you live more on his grace, and endear him to you, as the only refuge for your case. If you grow in self-knowledge, it should be your schoolmaster to teach you more of Christ; be-

cause the more you know him, the more you will trust him. He will every day give you more reason to do it: and mind, the more you trust him, the more you will love him. His Spirit will make him to your believing heart, a precious Jesus; and the constraining love of Christ will lead you to a diligent use of all the appointed means, in which he has promised to meet and to bless his people. This is our morality; and all this is favour. He giveth grace, and he giveth glory. Saints and angels are, and will be to eternity, worshippers of our Emmanuel: so says Peter, "To him be glory now, and through the day of eternity: Amen." My application was, 1. To the graceless. 2. To seekers. 3. To the weak in faith. 4. To the strong. All is from Christ. May this year be a growing year—downwards and upwards—out of self into Christ—from all creature dependence to more perfect, in and on God, his word and Spirit, as a witness to the fulness of Jesus. O Mr. T. this is fine talking: but, believe me, you may as soon create a world, as learn this lesson without almighty grace. Pray, pray for divine teaching. Pray for a growth in grace, that you may loathe and abhor yourself; and, repenting in dust and ashes, may adore the God of all grace. I am on my watch-tower for you, and for Mrs. T. and for all your family, that they may get it, and use it.

Mr. K. will not be offended at my wishing him more grace in his heart, and in his pulpit, and in his family.

W. R.

LETTER XXIV.

My dear Friend,—I have had to preach twelve times in fourteen days—and rather not well, till preaching comes, and then I get better. No Master like mine. His service is perfect freedom. Our meditation concerning him, on new-year's-day, was on one of his names, namely Melchisedec. From comparing what is said of him in Genesis, and in the 110th Psalm, with St. Paul's comment upon both these passages in Hebrews vii. it seems to me most certain, that Jesus Christ is the person spoken of in the Old Testament. The apostle has explained the word for us, and says it means, "the King of righteousness." O what a blessed name! There being none righteous, no, not one, he vouchsafed to be "the Lord our righteousness." He wrought it out for us, and applies it in us. He sends his Spirit to convince us that we want it, and to enable us to trust in his—to plead it in the conscience, and to rejoice in it in the heart, and to be filled with the blessed fruits (as Phil. i. 11.) of it in our lives. Consider, he is the King of this saving righteousness—a great King—Jehovah—King of kings—the Creator of heaven and earth—the God of providence, who upholdeth all things by the word of his power—the God of the fathers, worshipped under the tabernacle and temple dispensation—and the God whom Christians worship, it being their distinguishing character to call upon the name of the Lord, as you may see, Acts ix. 14. 1 Cor. i. 2.

2 Tim. ii. 22. May he reveal himself all the year to you, as your righteousness. And this is the proper work and office of faith—with all the confidence of your heart to depend upon him, so as to enjoy peace with God—love to God—and loving obedience. Remember, this year will call for much faith: and you will not exercise it as far as he warrants you. He bids you cast all your care upon him; for Mrs. T.—for children—for business—for death—for eternity: you cannot lay too much upon him, the government of all worlds is upon his shoulders. O precious faith! He is my King. He rules in my heart. He has set up there a throne of grace. He keeps under the rebels, and keeps me willing to follow him wheresoever his providence leads. Mr. T. I beg for you, and beg yourself, for more trust in the Lord our righteousness. That you may so grow in grace as to thank God, who always causeth you to triumph in Christ. W. R.

LETTER XXV.

YOUR late sickness had a voice—it spake—and you heard it say, “In the midst of life we are in death.” How short is life—how uncertain! How certain, infallibly certain, is death—how necessary is preparation for it—how dangerous the least delay—how comfortable a well-grounded hope of safety in death, and of joy beyond it! Mr. T. you know these things. O for more practical knowledge, and lively experience! There is an antidote against the sting, aye, and against the fear of death—an infal-

lible cure—true faith believes, and takes it. The conscience feels the sovereign virtue—the blood of the Lamb cleanses it from all sin: and when guilt is gone, the heart is saved from every enemy it had reason to fear, and is entitled to every blessing that God has promised. It is upon the ground of this warrant, and nothing else, (pray mind that,) that any man can look forward to death and judgment, with a hope full of glory and immortality. What said the blessed company of Old Testament martyrs? All these died in faith. To whom the New Testament church in perfect unison replies, Thanks be to God, who giveth us also the victory over the law, over sin, and over death, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Mr. T. you have their faith—God help you to make good use of it. If you live long, you must expect trials; the prospect which faith opens into the other world, will marvellously support and comfort you under them. God has given you many, many temporal blessings; this faith will improve them, and exalt them into spiritual and heavenly mercies—it will teach you to sit loose to them—God in them, and not they alone, will be your portion. You will taste his goodness in them; and when he calls you to leave them, you will be, he will make you, as ready to leave them, as a poor beggar would be to fall asleep, if the Almighty had promised that he should awake a great emperor. Our Jesus is this Almighty—he has promised to be our Shepherd through life and death. May he magnify his tender care over you, by making you feel happy in him, as happy as the 23d Psalm promises he will make you.

I know you will excuse my long sermon; but truly

I am so sensible of the importance of preparation, the dreadful danger of delay, that I could not help thanking my God, who had spared you. This sickness, I trust, was for his glory in your good—as Lazarus' was—but Lazarus died afterwards. May you live to die as Lazarus, and be where he is now. I assure you, the Christian hope has its present harvest of blessings. May you enjoy them abundantly, through life, and for ever and ever.

Mrs. T. is in my eye, and in my heart. What I wish you, I also wish her. She carries about with her a constant monitor, a weak and crazy body; and he says to her, "Be ye also ready." I know she believes: and whatever bad nerves may suggest, and they are terrible enemies to the comforts of Christ, yet he is on her side; and he will prove himself, in every time of need, to be her Saviour and her God. She is persuaded I make use of my interest with him for her, and for all she loves, especially my John, whom God bless. B. K. gave me yesterday a good account of his father—I was in prayer for him—and have now been giving of thanks: may he be preserved, for the sake of his church, his family, and his friends.

W. R.

LETTER XXVI.

To Mrs. T.

Nov. 28, 1785.

My dear Friend, Mrs. T.,—I was interested greatly in the birth of John; and, if I remember

well, I sent you on that occasion some reflections to stir up your gratitude. My heart has been with you on the present mercy, for which I joined in prayer, and now join in thanksgiving. You will not be offended that I send you what has been upon my mind lately, and what I trust has been also upon yours—may he, who commands the blessing, make it the means of exciting and increasing the praises of your heart. I suppose you in your closet, and in the presence of God.

O how many are my mercies ! and these new mercies are calling for a new song of praise.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name :

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits :

For surely his mercy and goodness have followed me all the days of my life.

O what was I, that God should set his love upon me before time, and in time call me to the saving knowledge of his Son, whom to know aright is life eternal ?

And what am I even now, since I have felt something of the power of his precious gospel ?

Why me, Lord ? what was I, what am I, that I should be chosen, and called, and accepted in the Beloved ? Not unto me, in the least, not unto me, but unto thy sovereign grace be all the praise.

O help me to ascribe unto thee the glory due unto thy great name ; for I am surrounded, I am loaded with thy benefits.

All thy dealings with me show forth thy loving-kindness, and in temporals, as well as spirituals, I am singularly favoured.

I cannot count my many many outward blessings, nor can I be thankful enough for a spiritual use of them.

When I survey my situation in life, my kind relations, my friends and substance, my house and servants, they all proclaim the bounty of heaven to my soul.

Thanks be to thee, thou that delightest to do good, I see thy hand, I taste something of thy love in all my enjoyments.

I thank thee for thy gifts—I use them by thy grace—and I bless thee, that they are in any measure sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

O how are my mercies increasing! They abound in number—in quality they grow more excellent: for I get two in one—first a mercy, and then a thankful heart to acknowledge it, which is grace for grace.

Let me, deeply impressed, lift up my heart to bless thee, Lord God, for my husband, my children, and especially for my new-born son—whom I devote to thee, and to thy service. O be with him through life! Thou knowest my heart, and the feelings of a mother, let the bowels of thy tender mercies in Christ be towards him. I ask nothing more for him, and thou wouldst not have me ask any thing less—than that thou mayest be his portion, and his exceeding great reward.

And now, Father of my mercies, who hast been the guide of my youth, into thy care and keeping I commit me and mine.

Here I am at P——, a miracle of thy goodness. Let me live here a life of praise—and whatever blessings thou givest, crown them with an humble and a thankful heart.

O let me never be suffered to rob thee of thy glory, but help me to give it all, where it is due, in life, and death, and to all eternity—to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

When this shall be completed, W. R. hopes to be in company, and to join in an everlasting hallelujah. Aye, and before too. The well-grounded expectation of this, feeds and nourishes our gratitude at present. Already I feel some of its heavenly influence, and my design in writing is, to suggest something which may give you a new relish of it. Though we cannot enjoy so much, nor praise so well, as our elder brethren who are now round the throne, yet surely we may taste and see as well as they, how gracious our Lord is; and although they are banqueting at the marriage-supper, yet we, the friends of the bridegroom, are invited to rejoice in our Lord as well as theirs, and we are commanded too to rejoice in him always: and again I say, rejoice.

My dear Mrs. F. I know your weak frame, and your poor nerves—I make allowances for your bodily infirmities; yet it is upon account of these very things that I would try to stir you up the more. You want fresh encouragements to believe, and by believing, not only to go on your way, but also to be able to go on rejoicing. Happy am I, if my good Master pleases to bless any thing I write to the increasing of your faith, and of your joy in him. Be assured, the more you trust him, the greater reason you will find to trust still more: and when you are quite satisfied that you are safe in his hands, as he warrants you to be, then will your love to him abound; for faith first worketh love, and then worketh by

love, keeping the heart warm, in its grateful attachment to a precious, precious Jesus. May this be your portion : so prays,
W. R.

LETTER XXVII.

Mrs. T.—You gave me great pleasure in your last letter. I am much beholden to you. I speak not after the manner of men, but from my heart. I feel thankfulness. It is no bad wish to pray you may feel as much ; for I am sure you have as much, if not more reason. You have a friend who has done wonders for you, and who expects nothing in return but an humble acknowledgment : and that also he must give you. I often think of his goodness, and bless him for you. If he took away a parent, he was better than a father. He himself brought you up, and made your guardians so careful of you, and so kind to you. He sent you your husband, and put you into such circumstances that your heart cannot wish for more. Look back, Mrs. T., look round, and see whether our God hath not dealt bountifully with you. May all his temporal mercies stir up, and increase gratitude in your soul. But what are these, though they be great, and many, and undeserved, compared to his special favours ! I knew he loved you : but I am happy to have it under your hand. Whatever almighty love can do—he will perform. O what a debt do you owe him—for his unspeakable gifts—himself ! What a sum is that ! His Spirit, to unite your spirit to Jesus. O what an infinite mercy ! And to abide with you to keep you in union,

and to establish communion with God your Saviour, that in his fulness you may find and enjoy all the blessings of the Father's love—his Father, and in Jesus your Father. By what gracious providences has he led you to this experience ! Your relations, friends, acquaintance, and education, all kindly overruled by him to train you up in the good old way. Your present settlement, the family you are in, the ministry you sit under—O what mercies ! The Bible opened to you, the promises credited, put in suit, applied. Prayer a delight, in some measure—praise at times very encouraging—an humble walk, as I can witness. My dear friend, raise up your heart, and bless his holy name. If your heart be cold, like the weather, warm it at his love : for all his gifts are but a little earnest in hand. At present, your best is but a foretaste. Look forward, and see what an estate you have in reversion. True, it is only in promise ; but that credited is as good as any freehold. Trust, trust him, be not afraid. It is yet but a little, very little while, and he will put you into full possession. And I hope to see it, and join your eternal song of praise to God and the Lamb. Your friends die. The year is just dead. I am tottering over the grave : but he says to me, and he keeps up my spirits, “ Because I live, ye shall live also.” In this confidence, come what may, I go on my way rejoicing.

W. R.

LETTERS

TO

DIFFERENT FRIENDS.

Letters to the Hon. and Rev. W. B. C.

LETTER I.

June 15, 1782.

MY dear Friend,—Our Lord has been showing you some tokens of his singular regard for you. Whom he loveth he takes pains with. He has been trying you with his rod: the trial on his part was altogether love, and graciously intended for your improvement, “I will feed them,” says the good Shepherd, “with the rod.”—Strange food to reason and sense, but rendered truly nourishing to faith. It learns to feel what sin, exceeding sinful sin, is. The smart says, “Sin deserves ten thousand times more than this:” the smart continues, “Jesus, Lord, thy will be done; only let faith and patience have their perfect work, that I may love thee for mortifying the life of sense:” the disorder abates, “O dear Saviour, keep me humble and thankful, that I may so cleave to thee with full purpose of heart, as to be dying daily to other objects, and be more alive to thee: as

the pain drove me to thee, may the removing it keep me nearer to thee, so that I may practically learn to set the Lord always before me." These, and many other improvements, I hope, followed your late visitation. It was sent to yield you the peaceable fruits of righteousness; yea, a harvest of blessings—may they be rich and ripe to the glory of the Giver!

W. R.

LETTER II.

Blackfriars, Dec. 23, 1783.

DEAR Sir,—By favour of Mr. Neucatre, I send my hearty wishes for your meeting the birth of Christ with the spirit of the angels. It was the triumph of their joy that Christ the Lord was born; and yet he was not so nearly related to them, as to you and me. But they thought according to God's thoughts; and, as far as they understood them, they admired and adored his inestimable love in taking our nature into union with himself. What a miracle of philanthropy! "Will God in very deed dwell with men" on the earth? O yes! though it puzzled Solomon, yet God's counsels of old are now faithfulness and truth. The Word is incarnate. Glory be to God in the highest, the Peacemaker is come to the earth, and has demonstrated the delight of his Father towards men. Blessed be his witness—that you believe it: blessed be his grace—that you enjoy it: thanks be to his holy name—that you preach it. May your meditations upon it, and your present preaching of it, warm your heart with more than an-

god's joy. Try to get a note above them; I am sure you ought, notwithstanding they were *συνψιστοις*. I am aiming at it this Christmas, but have not yet attained. And this makes up some of my best praise—what he is to me—and what I am to him. I see, and am under such infinite obligations, that I am willing to be in his debt for ever and ever. Even then I shall pay him nothing; or if it be worth any thing, it will be all his own. All my fresh springs of glory, as well as grace, shall be in him. W. R.

LETTER III.

Nov. 26, 1785.

My very dear Friend,—Methinks I heard a voice, saying, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves." However, I could not help weeping for our loss, although we are certain she is entered into rest. The church and people in R—— have a great loss, and none more than yourself: for she really was a mother to you in love, in every good office, and in continual prayer for your person and for your labours. The poor will feel their loss. Her long experience made her wise in the things of God, by which she could teach the ignorant with a meekness quite her own. Her natural temper, sanctified by grace, enabled her frequently to check the spreading of furious zeal and wild separations: both which have had their day, but I thank God seem to be dying away at R——. Though we know not the effect of her prayers, yet her Lord is our Lord. He still reigneth: and to him I will make my supplication. He will hear me often

before his throne on the same errand. For many years his interest at St. G——'s has been upon my heart. Still I feel it warm: and I hope it will be warmer. When you speak in public upon the occasion of her death, I will be praying him to make it the means of giving life to many dead sinners. The Lord Jesus bless your preaching that day to all who hear it. My feelings are such, that I am sure I could not be able to speak on the subject. My eyes are running down with tears while I am writing. I do not resist his will: O no, I kiss the rod, but I do feel the smart, and shall for some time. God sanctify it. May the Comforter take of the things of Jesus, and with them help us to improve this visitation. May Mrs. C—— profit much; and all of us learn, that there is no blessing upon earth, but living in the Lord, and then great will be our blessedness, when we come to die in the Lord. Mrs. R—— very heartily joins, and begs to be remembered with yours,

W. R.

LETTER IV.

To Sir R. H. Bart.

Nov. 18, 1791..

HONOURED Sir,—I do not know that you are returned to England, but if you are, I am sure you have seen enough abroad, to endear your native country to you more than ever. It is at present the favourite of heaven. Our privileges as free men, and as Christians, set us far above the nations of the

earth. It is my office to plead with the Lord and Governor of church and state, that we may not be suffered to sin away our distinguishing blessings. I have some interest with a very great Prince, and I am often mentioning you to him, and recommending your case. For he delighteth in mercy. May you know him more than I do, and love him, and delight in him, and every day find him a more, still more precious Jesus. O how marvellous should he be in your eyes—yours are not common favours—that he should vouchsafe to call one of your fortune and rank, should admit you into his friendship, which I am sure is heaven upon earth. O bless him for what he has done—and pray for greater things yet. Holding the truth in love, may you grow up into him in all things. May your sister and brother partake of the same blessings, is the daily request of your friend and servant in the Lord Christ, W. R.

LETTER V.

Dec. 3, 1791.

My very dear Friend,—I have a long letter from H. full of complaints. I know one, whose very soul is delighted with hearing such complaints; for they are the breathings of his own Spirit in the heart of his redeemed, and therefore sent that Christ may be more necessary and more precious: but indeed, my friend, you legalize them, and make those things distressing which were only intended to be humbling. The cause of every possible complaint is in you, whether you feel it or not. You have an abyss

of corruption; so have I, and perhaps felt it deeper than ever you have, or will feel it. But I have a teacher who makes this whole body of sin profitable, and to the increase of my faith, and to the magnifying the grace of my almighty Saviour. My daily lesson is to carry my burden to him, and he carries both me and it: and while we thus go on lovingly together, he often lets me look into the hell within, but he keeps my conscience sprinkled with his atoning blood, and even then I do feel its sovereign virtue to cleanse me from all my sins, if they were ten million times more and greater than they are. Thus believing, yet groaning under my dreadful load, I hear the Father's testimony, and I honour it: "Thy sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

You met an old saint at Sandwell; and you wished to be in his case. I do not. I suppose you mean F. C. I know him well. I dare not unchristian him. But I thank my God for his leading, I think, in a more gospel way, and I am sure a safer. Carrying about me a body of sin and death, I groan under it being burdened; it is my continual plague night and day; it makes me loathe myself, and repent in dust and ashes. Hereby I am kept sensible of my wants, my unworthiness, my helplessness, my villainess: and through grace these things are made useful to bind me closer to my beloved. They render him absolutely necessary to my desperate case, and preach that self-abhorrence which makes Christ very precious. This should be the happy improvement of all the bitter things you write against yourself: in my judgment and experience they make for you. Under the law, they speak guilt and misery: un-

der the gospel, they magnify the grace and salvation of our God. I observe also, that you attend too much, by far, to what others (perhaps professors) say of you: and it brings distress upon you, and hurts your spirits. But they are not your judges; neither are they competent. Thus I read—Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God. God can be with you. God can help you to glorify him, by your abiding in your calling. He has promised it. In a cottage in Wales you would be out of your place and duty. You would carry yourself there. Retirement in will-worship would make you feel more the plague of your own heart, and your cottage would be a very hell upon earth: because you had left the station, wherein God, and his help, and his comforts, were to be found. Indeed, Sir R. you have no justifiable ground of distress, either from God or man. You know the truth of what I say, but still the effect remains. Your heart is not perfectly settled in the gospel rest. He that settled me, he alone can settle you. There comes in another part of Christian friendship, which I do exercise and am diligent in. The prayer of faith availeth much—to keep you, as you are, still full of complaints, but improving them in a free spirit to the glory of the Saviour; a child of Adam, deserving hell; a believer in Jesus, an heir of heaven. May he keep you by his mighty power till he bring you safe to his promised heaven. W. R.

LETTER VI.

Tiverton, Sept. 5, 1794.

MY dear Friend,—The will of the Lord be done. He does all things for the best, and he is teaching you not only to say it, but also to feel it; I know it, for his compassions fail not. And he will make you sensible, that all his dealings with you are in loving kindness and great tenderness. Look back, see and admire in what a gracious way he has led hitherto all your steps. O what distinguishing favours: to call you by his grace—to make you obedient to his call—to teach you his gospel, in a manner vouchsafed to very few—to keep you by his own power for so many years, that you have not fallen, nor disgraced your profession of our most holy faith; and that to this hour he preserves you, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus unto eternal life! Indeed, my dear Sir, these are sovereign blessings, and I verily believe that you are well taught how to apply them on the present occasion: nay, thanks be to him, I have it under your own hand, that he has enabled you to submit to his will. He has taken away a sister, but she is with him. You have lost a friend, but he has found her. She is dead, but she liveth. O most blessed change! She is gone from sin and suffering, to live with God for ever. I am ready to say, notwithstanding she will be so much missed in your family, from my very heart I praise and worship him, that he has taken her into his heaven and glory. He did it too in a way which was singularly kind to

her surviving relations—I mean those hidings of the Lord's loving countenance, and those desertions and darkness of which she complained.* You cannot think what a great refreshment this was to my spirits, and what a testimony it was of the soundness of her faith and of her experience. On all these accounts let your sorrow be turned into joy. Survey your mercies, personal: look at your family; where can you show me so many chosen and called? Let B. speak. Let Mrs. T. speak. Let all that love H. speak: and say, he is good to them indeed, for his mercy to them endureth for ever. Blessings on him; he is good in what he gives. He is good, **yea**, blessed of all, in what he takes away. Strew her hearse with praises; and if a tear be shed, let sorrow be turned into joy: for what we deposit of her we commit into his care and keeping, who will make it one day shine like his own most glorious body.

I thank him, therefore, for the good news which you sent me: and with my thanks I join my prayers for your profiting from this providence. It warns you to be ready. You are in the last stage of your journey. He can make it the best. He has promised it; and he cannot break his word. He has a marvellous skill, and an equally marvellous love, in making the infirmities of age so many motives to trust him more. Less of sense, more of faith. Less of self, more of Christ. An infirm body, a sound mind. Nature failing, grace reigning, and that unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. May

* After this season of darkness, she was enabled to rejoice in God our Saviour, and departed in full assurance of faith.

you find every day, and for every thing, that he is with you—keeping your conscience in his peace—your heart in his love—your life in his hands—and your hope in his glory. Whatever interest I have in him, is yours: and I trust he will make the prayer of faith, which is fervent for you, effectual also. W. R.

LETTER VII.

To A. S. Esq.

May 5, 1777.

MY very dear Friend,—The great breadth of the Atlantic Ocean, nor long distance, nor my not hearing from you, can keep you and me asunder. What a wonderful attraction is there in Christian love! I have fellowship with you in spirit, though far absent in body: and in such a bond as no nearness of flesh can tie. Your concerns are mine. I feel them. I rejoice with you. I mourn with you. I pray with you. I meet you at one throne. Our mutual requests are poured into one bosom. His eyes, his heart, are upon us both. He sends my prayers for you back with increasing love to you, and to him for it. Such a friend is our Jesus! Who is like him? By his magnetical virtue, two persons distant thousands of miles, can have a fellow-feeling. And by means of their common interest in him, they can do one another the very best services: for his Spirit actuates all his members; who, by their oneness with the head, are sensible of their mutual pains and pleasures, as our members in the body are. The

nerves all over in contact: and if one member be affected with pain or pleasure, all the members feel with it. I reckoned this my privilege. Among the number (and I trust it is not small) who are wishing you all blessings, I have the honour to be among the foremost, and will yield only to one. My thoughts often turn upon your present situation: distant from your wife and children, far from your friends, separate from your worldly connections; these do not excite pleasing sensations. But I am chiefly affected for your distance from the ark and ordinances. Does this grieve you? There was one in the wilderness of Judah in your case. Happy should I be, if his sentiments should be yours. Excuse my jealousy over you: for indeed it is a godly jealousy. Turn to the 63d Psalm, and may the breathing of your heart be like his.

I meet with many people who say they never saw such a need of this petition as at present: Grant us peace in our time, O Lord. I keep on praying, but the cloud does not disperse. It is still thick, black, and lowering. The storm gathers, and threatens a wide-spread ruin. This makes me pray more earnestly. I would be found among the holy mourners, deeply concerned not only for mine own sins, but for theirs also, which have brought down the just wrath of heaven. Sin is the cause of our present suffering. Judgment is gone forth, and if there be no turning from sin, judgment will continue: yea, if there be hardness in sin under judgment, it is not only the forerunner of greater misery, but is also a part of the sentence executed. W. R.

LETTER VIII.

Dec. 22, 1779.

My dear Friend,—I need not tell you, that I have you always upon my heart. At this time I am praying for you, that you may be kept very hungry and thirsty after Christ—among them whom he pronounces blessed, and whom he will make blessed. It is a sign of health to have a good appetite. There is no better evidence of our having tasted that the Lord is gracious, than still to be waiting on him for the bread of life, and for the water of life. And he does truly nourish us, when we feel the manna sweet, and the Spirit refreshes our hearts with it. Then that meat is not light bread, but a delightful feast; and the cup of salvation is full, yea, runneth over with blessings. May these be the choicest of your Christmas fare. And to make you more willing than ever to sit down with the Lord at his royal table. The meat is from heaven, and feeds the heavenly life. The drink sobers. The more you take of it, the more it will deaden your senses to earthly joys; and it will render spiritual joys more spiritual: for it comes from heaven, and tastes of heaven; and it is indeed a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. In his name I invite you this Christmas, and out of some of his love I wish you to share with us in those blessings. If not present in person, I hope you will be with us in spirit at our banquet: and so to live upon Christ with his redeemed, as to say with them—He is a feast of fat things—

all delights in one. Blessed be our matchless Emmanuel, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things: and blessed is his glorious name, not only at Christmas, but for ever; and the whole earth shall be filled with his glory. Amen and amen.

W. R.

LETTER IX.

March 18, 1780.

My very dear Friend,—I do not follow impulses, as you very well know; but I cannot resist the present; night and day it is upon my mind; my heart runs upon it, and when I would have other thoughts this will intrude and come uppermost. It will be some relief to me to give it vent, and perhaps answer all my wishes in communicating it to you; for I must inform you that you are the person concerned, and it is in your power to grant me my heart's desire. Ought you not to write up over your door, *Deus nobis hæc otia fecit*; and should it not engage your most serious attention? How shall I employ these *horæ solitariae* most and best to the glory of my God; and as far as he pleases to enable me to promote the interest of his dear people? I think you was not sent to M—— for nothing. Outward causes we look beyond. His hand hath certainly done it. Well then, come forward. When you know your call, be ready. Here I am, send me. What is the will of my Lord? He has given me leisure: my capacity, be what it may, is his sovereign gift. And the right use of it is also of his sovereign grace.

What would my Lord have me to do in order to show forth his praise?

I can answer for you, that these are your sentiments—I am certain they are. And will you give me leave to point out, what appears to me a most profitable and a most seasonable improvement of this gracious opportunity? I suppose you are now and then thanking that great and good Saviour, who had led you to glorify his name and his offices, and had enabled you to bear a noble testimony for his Godhead in this day of blasphemy. In such seasons of gratitude does it not sometimes occur to you, that you was assisted in this work by him who leadeth into all truth? Indeed, Sir, you are under marvellous obligations, the greatest which can possibly be, to the Lord God the Holy Ghost. You owe him more than you can ever repay—more than you can ever count up. Your returns, the most grateful, are but acknowledgments; and these are also his gifts. What if you was to sit down and try to estimate your debt. Consider who he is—what he does in the spiritual world—what he has done for you and in you—will do as long as you have your being. Resolve all this in your mind, pray him to impress it deep upon your heart. The consequence I verily believe will be, that the blessings derived from him are infinite, and your obligations such as demand everlasting praise. With a heart warmed with these views, you could not be able to resist the dictates of gratitude. You would look up and say, May the Spirit of wisdom and revelation assist me to treat of his true and essential divinity. W. R.

LETTER X.

Blackfriars, Jan. 31, 1781.

DEAR Sir,—I have seen the outside of Mr. H's. publication ; but have no desire to take one view within. I wish to keep to my motto—*Homo sum unius libri* ; of which, the more I read, the more I long to read ; it is always new—always instructing—always delightful. In books I converse with men ; in the Bible I converse with God. That most blessed Spirit, of whom you are writing, speaks with the word to my heart ; and then I look up, and entreat him to get himself glory from you and your labours. In this sweet intercourse, I am often present at ——. I pay you frequent visits in your study, and rejoice in beholding the advancement of the work. When I see you hard and industrious in your writing, I cannot help praying the Holy Ghost to inspire your thoughts, and to give you the pen of a ready writer. What if you are laid aside for a little while, and kept out of your line of life—May it not be of mercy, that you may have leisure to improve in self-knowledge ? O blessed retirement, if it prove the means of leading you to devote your time and talents to the service of that God who has conferred such favours upon you ! He has given you life—life from the dead. What is that mercy ? Who can tell ? It passeth knowledge. He has given you the Spirit of life—who has been teaching you to live upon the fulness of Emmanuel. He has been testifying of that fulness to you, and I hope

enabling you to glorify it in word and in deed ; his gracious office herein, is one of the most interesting views which we can take of his and of the Saviour's love, as represented, John xvi. 14, 15.—a favourite text of mine, on which I have preached many times. If you look to the Greek, you will consider the word *ἀναγγελεῖ*, translated to show a very gross mistake : it belongs to the ear, and not to the eye—not to seeing, but to speaking : to the word which, preached clearly, begets faith, and which, believed, nourishes faith ; and, as faith increases, glorifies still more that fulness of Jesus, out of which comes every grace and blessing. Hence the word is often used in the New Testament for preaching the gospel, by which the testimony of the Spirit is received, and the fulness of Jesus glorified and made use of. I would render the word—he shall clearly declare or preach, and so manifest the things of Christ, that they shall become the object of faith, and hope, and love. I could write a volume on this most gracious office of the Spirit : may you see it in my light, or rather in his own light ; and let it shine before men. W. R.

LETTER XI.

Southampton, Oct. 14, 1783.

My dear Friend,—I have good news to tell you from a far country, as refreshing as cold water to a thirsty soul. God has spared me to read over my Bible once more. O what a treasure—what unsearchable riches are there in this golden mine ! I never dug deeper, nor found more precious jewels

than upon this last perusal. You know it is my constant custom, as soon as St. Dunstan's lectures are over, to begin the Bible, and without stopping or interruption, to go on from Genesis to the end of the Revelation. This exercise is always begun with prayer, and carried on with a settled dependence on the Spirit of prayer; and I am always wishing to ascribe all the profit (and it has been very, very great) to the praise of the glory of his grace. At present, I am not reading my Bible, in order to find out some new truth, but to be established in what I do know, and to attain more confirmation of it. This I would chiefly seek for, that I may get growing experience of the wisdom of God, and of the power of God, in his word, and may thereby enjoy the blessings of his love promised in it. With this view, I send you some of my observations on the reading of the Bible in the year 1783. I am happy in believing, that your heart harmonizes with me in them. One of the first things to be noticed and expected is, the actual fulfilling of the promises to this day, namely, that the Holy Spirit is still in the word: he works in it, and by it. He makes it at present, as much as he ever did, the great ordinance of God unto salvation, as you may observe in Isa. lix. 20, 21.; hence it is called the ministration of the Spirit, because in it he holds forth Jesus Christ to be the Almighty Saviour: and whomsoever he calls by it to come to the Saviour, he makes his call to them effectual. They receive the Spirit by the hearing of the word, as Gal. iii. 2.

This, my good friend, is what you and I should above all things seek. We should be always pray-

ing for the Spirit to accompany his own word. It is our duty to hear and read ; but we should always do it with the fixed dependence of our hearts upon his divine teaching ; without which, the word itself will profit us nothing, as we read, Heb. iv. 2. " The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them who heard it." May the good Spirit keep us in the use of means, but entirely dependent upon him in the use of them. Thanks be to him, that in this frame of mind I have once more gone through his word, settled and grounded more steadfastly than ever before ; that the word of God can be made useful to me, only by the Spirit of God. The next thing that engaged my attention, was the divine and infallible truth of the holy Scriptures, of which I have been convinced with all the riches of the full assurance of understanding. Our Lord said in his last prayer—" Father, thy word is truth." And I say the same. I have set my seal to it on this last reading : every line, every word is according to the mind of the infinitely wise God. It is his revealed will ; and it discovers to us objects in God's light, as he sees them ; whereby the Holy Spirit renews us in true knowledge, after the image of him that created us : he brings our understanding to submit to be informed by his unerring word. Whatever it reveals of Jehovah, of the three Persons in Jehovah, of the God-man, of his salvation, of the way of receiving the benefit of it in time and in eternity ; he has made me willing to live in entire subjection to its teaching. My constant inquiry is—What it reveals. Not, why ? I study to know it, not as a metaphysician, but as a Christian. I seek,

not so much to comprehend it, as to believe it. Nothing appears to me more reasonable, than that my reason should submit to God's reason: and therefore I am kept praying for divine grace, to make his word, like the light of the sun, clear in my head, and fruitful in my heart.

My dear friend, let me recommend to you this method of reading your Bible. Ever take it up as the oracles of God—the infallible standard of truth. The abiding persuasion of this will save you a great deal of trouble, and will bring you in vast profit. You will not have much occasion to consult authors, or to spend your time in perusing many books. If you take up your Bible with a settled conviction that it is the truth of God, and that it has the stamp of divine authority, this will be the means of your understanding more of the Scriptures, than all the comments in the world could give you: because your mind, having received the impression of divine truth, is now disposed to receive the impression of divine power; which is another matchless excellency of the word of God.

The Spirit of God still works in it, and by it; as in the first creation, so, in the new creation, he does all by his Almighty Fiat. He speaks, and it is done; he commands, and is obeyed. His is a creating word; he calls, and the dead hear. It is a life-giving word. He follows the call, and the quickened sinner believes—faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; and this faith is as great a demonstration of divine power, as raising Christ from the dead was; as you may see, Ephes. i. 19, 20., &c. Then he puts his word into the in-

ward parts, and the believer is enabled to feed upon it, and to be nourished thereby, even up unto life everlasting: so that he often says to his Lord—"Jesus, to whom should I go? Thou only hast the words of eternal life." This divine efficacy of the Scriptures, is the principal thing by which God magnifies his word above all his name. He has made it his ordinance, like the fixed laws of nature—by which he still keeps up intercourse and communion between himself and his people, and gives them to see and to enjoy his perfections. His Spirit makes it effectual to begin, and to carry on fellowship with the Father and the Son. And thus he is daily magnifying it, by realizing the promises, and putting believers into possession of the graces and blessings promised in it. So that it is to this hour, the mighty power of God, as truly as when he spake the world into being; as effectual, as when he said, "Lazarus, come forth." My dear friend, may you and I feel it more, still more: may we live happy partakers of its influence; and whenever we hear it, read it, or meditate upon it, may we get fresh experience of the power of God in his word; which will bring us another blessing peculiar to the Scriptures: by acknowledging them to be the truth of God, and finding them to be the power of God, we shall come to experience their divine sweetness.

It is by continual dependence on the teaching of the Spirit, in and by the word, and by mixing faith with it, that we come to find its value, and to taste its pleasures: for it then opens a new world to us, a spiritual and eternal world—it reveals to us the God of that world—our Father loving us in his Son. It

makes known the Son's wonderful person, and his heavenly work in salvation, with all the blessings of it, which faith brings into present enjoyment. The believer is made alive to them, and then has his spiritual senses exercised upon them; and each sense has its proper object, and its peculiar delight, as we read—O come, taste and see how gracious the Lord is—hear his voice, for it is sweet—smell the good odour of his perfume, for his name is as ointment poured forth—come and handle the word of God. What a paradise is here! as real, but more blessed than Adam's. Believe me, Sir, I know you do. In my last reading, God has thus blessed me; what the word reports, the Spirit has realized. In the way of believing the promises, I have found the fulfilling of them. I speak for God, and his glorious word. Away self. The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, does by it, at this day, make good his name and his office: he shall take of mine, says Jesus, and shall show it (manifest it) unto you; the spiritual world, all the graces, all the glories of it—he will not only manifest them to you clearly, but he will also enable you to believe them with a pleasing earnest, and to enjoy them with many a sweet foretaste of the glory that is to be revealed.

There is a very delightful account of this in the 19th Psalm. What if I should set my seal to it, and say that I know what is spoken in the first part concerning the light of this world to be matter of fact, as well as what is spoken in the second part concerning the light of the spiritual world—Would not you allow me, Sir, to be a competent judge of both? And when the same prophet adds—"O,

what love have I unto thy law ! I rejoice in it as one that findeth great spoil ! yea, it is dearer to me than thousands of gold and silver :” blessed be God, I find it so. Indeed, upon every reading of the Bible, it grows more precious to me, as it did to David ; because it is not only the discovery, but it is become also the conveyance of the unsearchable riches of Christ : these are revealed in the word, and applied by the word. Faith is the lawful key which opens the infinite treasury, and hears the proclamation of grace : “ O ye that are seeking durable riches—these, all these are yours. Come, take all you want—use all you wish,—you cannot do the free Giver a greater favour than to enrich yourselves daily out of his boundless store. Read his promises, how exceeding great, how exceeding precious they are : read his faithfulness to them. Only trust, take, use,—all that is in the promises shall be yours in time, yea, yours in eternity.” This proclamation of grace I have heard. I believe it. Blessed be a promise-keeping God, I enjoy it. And I can assure you, Sir, there is more to be had out of Christ’s fulness, than any one upon earth has yet enjoyed. For he not only giveth fresh grace, but also more grace. I have never been more thoroughly convinced of this, than upon my last reading. God has humbled me, and has made me feel more of mine own poverty, and has thereby led me to live more upon Christ’s everlasting treasury. You do not suspect me of boasting : O no. I would glorify the word and work of the Almighty. A beggar would not be reckoned proud for saying, “ When I was just starving, I met with a charitable person, who not only fed me, but

also feasted me ; and then most generously provided for me all the rest of my days." Should not such a one acknowledge his benefactor, and bless him ? So do I. Thanks be to him who realized to me his word—who opened mine eyes to see wondrous things out of his law—who often made me to look up and say, " O how sweet are thy words unto my taste ; yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth." Blessed be God for his good word : it is really manna ; it is angels' food ; it comes from heaven ; it tastes of heaven.

When I sat down to write, I little thought my pen would run so fast, or that it would hold out so long. Will you excuse this long scribble ? You will. I am writing to a friend who knows that I have still much more to say of my last reading. I bespeak your candour, while I am mentioning one thing more ; and that is, the great end and design of the Scripture, which is to conform us to it. This is the completing work of God, the Spirit by his word ; all the rest were to lead to this. When the word is understood, and believed, and lived upon, then he makes it the means of conforming the whole man to it. The believer is cast into the mould of it ; he takes the impression—every feature. It is so assimilating, every tint is to be seen upon him. He lives the word ; it is to be read in his looks, visible in his walk, manifest in his tempers. See him, study him ; he is the lively picture of a Bible-Christian : let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ. By this rule he orders it : he seeks to be a pattern of the truth as it is in Jesus, and does not seek in vain. The Spirit by faith makes Jesus very precious. The heart loves

him, loves to be like him ; much fellowship with him endears him more to the heart, and it becomes true liberty. It is real happiness to have constant communion with him, especially to feel the influence of his cross and the power of his resurrection.

My much beloved, may this be your experience. Outstrip me as far as you can : may your sentiments, your affections, your life and conduct, all of them be conformed to the rule of God's word. I shall pray for it, for you and for yours, that you may live by gospel motives, and do all to gospel ends. And may the Bible be made good, and fulfilled to you in earth and in heaven.

I stop, but not because my subject is exhausted. I have daily fresh matter of praise. Still I am reading and admiring. New beauties spring up. Yearly, daily, I shall have praises to give for this most blessed book ; and if I live to walk with you on Heckfield Heath, I may continue the subject. May your Lord and mine open our understandings, that we may understand the Scriptures. W. R.

LETTER XII.

Nov. 21, 1785.

ENCLOSED you will receive a present of my own Hebrew Bible ; not a bribe, but a token of Christian love, that, remembering me as often as you see it, you may pray for me while I live, and bless God for me when I die. It is truly a precious book. Every day it grows more precious—not only from it fresh light, and life, and comfort, but also more. Many

years' studies, with God's blessings upon them, have favoured me with an insight into the meaning of Col. ii. 2. Eternal thanks be to a divine teacher for opening all the riches of the full assurance of understanding ! O what, what a happiness is it to be quite satisfied that objects in the spiritual world are exactly as they are described in the Bible ! for, by being thus taught, one gets ready hold of the spiritual parts of scripture instruction, and fastens at once upon the enjoyment of them by faith. This is truly a present heaven. I wish you more than I have of it, though I have my share in its chartered graces and blessings ; which I have now entered upon by holding the truth in love, and am thereby growing up into him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ. In this view the Bible is inestimable. It is not only a perfect map of the spiritual world ; but the believer, surveying its riches, and beauties, and pleasures, has a good warrant to say, All these are mine, for God is mine. I cannot tell you how great the happiness is, when the eternal Spirit opens, and applies, and puts the believer into the present enjoyment of the graces here promised, as so many earnest of the glory that is to be revealed. You know enough to make you join me in blessing and adoring our Sovereign Lord and God, who has given us in it, and by it, to taste how gracious he is. I have no words to describe the value of these mercies. My thoughts are quite lost in the survey of them. Why me ? what was I, what am I, that this great charter of grace, with all its privileges and honours, should be by infinite mercy granted unto me ? I daily sit me down in admiration, content with my Lord's own meditation upon the subject, Matt. xi. 25—27.

W. R.

LETTER XIII.

March 4, 1786.

MY dear Friend,—I am often with you at Heckfield, in the spirit of that good man who found himself happy in the happiness of others—" Though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the Spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ." I salute you, brother, and the church in your house. I have fellowship with you in our common Head. I feel the same Spirit breathe through us, even the Spirit of our glorified Jesus, very remarkably giving us the same judgment—forming our hearts to the same affections—and influencing us to walk in the same way. Blessings on him for this great grace. As I see it—great it is indeed; for yet a little, very little while, it will grow to full perfection. And we shall have the same Spirit uniting us sensibly to the same Head, and giving us to receive out of his infinite fulness glory for glory: and this is the charity, love to the Head, and thereby love to the members, which never faileth. It is waxing cold on the earth, as it was foretold; but they who live near to the Sun, still receive some of those enlivening beams which make the everlasting day. I have felt their influence, as you have done in your solitary hours, and I rejoice in hope that they will abound yet more and more in knowledge and sensible experience. I sat down to thank you for your love, and for its fruits. But I cannot help it—at once I am led by the

streams to the fountain-head. And I look upon it to be no injury to the streams, to say, they flow from such a fountain as covenant love.—Truly, Sir, there is something of heaven in the spiritual enjoyment of our creature-comforts. Put Christ into them, and they are marvellously refined and exalted.

W. R.

LETTER XIV.

Dec. 22, 1788.

MY dear Friend,—I have your *Remembrancer* by me, and I send you mine for the next year. Accept it, and use it, that it may help the exercise of brotherly love. It has been long my Vade Mecum; for in the blank memorandum part I record the memorables, temporal and spiritual, of the day. I find the review always humbles, always exalts God's mercies; and as to the present time, it is certainly good to try to fasten something to the flying moments, which may hinder them from running to waste, especially when they have almost done their flight, as they have with me. What should I do now without Christ! Much time to redeem—every earthly help failing—and these few days are in all respects evil—private—public—church—state. O! what *Kaxia*, as our Lord calls it. Happy for us, he is on the throne, and ruleth right. Our word for 1789, is to be "The Lord reigneth," Jehovah Jesus, over all worlds, and over all creatures; and to him every knee shall willingly, or unwillingly, bow. My dear friend, remember me in an especial manner

on new-year's-day, that when I speak of the character of our royal Sovereign, the King of kings, of the nature of his government, and of the peculiar happiness of his subjects, I may be enabled to speak, in some measure, suitable to his fame and high renown. You know one who saw a great deal more of him than any one of us do, and who spoke with admiration—"Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can show forth all his praise?" Because he could not, he did not give over praising. O no! he never stopped; he is at it still; through the ages of eternity he will be blessing God and the Lamb. I am living in hopes it will not be long before I shall join him; and his subject of praise, which is mine now, will be mine then. The prospect is big with blessings.

W. R.

LETTER XV.

April 12, 1790.

My very dear Friend,—I was thinking this morning what excuse I could make for not acknowledging a very acceptable present, and for not answering a friendly note with it, long ago. Like most of us, very glad to receive favours, but tardy in giving of thanks, I was for laying it upon more business than I was become equal to, having very near attained that late period of life, in which Moses says, (and I feel it,) Psalm xc. 10. our utmost efforts are pain and weariness, both of mind and body. Our strength is really to sit still. And a blessed lesson it is, when, human efforts ceasing, we are led to make

the works of Jesus all our salvation, and to find by happy experience that it is become all our desire. O what a good time has he lived to, whether he be young or old, who is dying in this faith !

But when I had written this excuse down, and read it, I was quite ashamed of it, because it confuted itself. It savoured a good deal of their practice, (Gen. iii.) who sought to lay the blame upon any thing rather than themselves ; for indeed most excuses are lies. An indolent temper, when what must be done of necessary preparation for public preaching was over, unwilling to set about other things ; wanting to relax ; and too often easing the mind by that spirit, by which many trespass upon God's goodness ; delaying from day to day—I will write to-morrow ; or, what signifies it, when I do write I shall say nothing that will be worth postage. All my former excuses failed me this morning, April 12th ; and I now cry *peccavi*—I have got to the true cause, forgive me this wrong. I am to thank you for a Christian Remembrancer of this last edition, finely bound, for Mrs. Romaine. Better late than never to repent and amend. In these troublesome times I find it good to follow Habakkuk's example, which is all the politics I wish to know : he prayed, he got into his watch-tower, and waited for an answer, and he received it, and praised God for it. I am doing the same for the public—at prayers for the church, groaning under an oppression harder than the Chaldean bondage. I pray on, but am still in my watch-tower—I can get no answer—one can see no end of the present troubles—the cause is not removed, therefore they continue ; they increase,

as if so many fiends of hell were let loose, and suffered to do all the mischief which Satan himself could wish. We know where to lay the blame: unbelief is the provoking sin; it has brought ruin upon many great kingdoms; so that we can trace the vengeance of heaven against it from age to age, down to the present miseries of Europe. Infidelity led the way—"We will not have this man to reign over us." Then he left them to themselves: upon which Antichrist, that is, Apollion, brought out his legions and armies to destroy, and they have destroyed, all law, order, property, religion, insomuch that the earth is made by them like another hell. I tremble; for who takes warning? O my country, my country! I fear for England. We are not much unlike the kingdom of France, very near her in her sin, and may not be far from her in her punishment. Therefore I keep me in my watch-tower, praying and pleading for mercy, begging our Lord to spare us for his own name's sake. This is my only plea. Are we better than they? It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. May these move him to pour upon us a spirit of prayer and supplication, that, as a nation, we may with national repentance keep the 19th instant, humbled under his mighty hand. This is such a fast as he hath chosen; and for his own glory may he work a general reformation, that iniquity may not be our ruin. I hope you will keep me company in my watch-tower: then especially, but at all times there to plead for you and yours,

W. R.

LETTER XVI.

Reading, Jan. 19, 1792.

My very dear Friend,—I sit down only to tell you that I feel for you. I remember Mrs. H., a friend of ours, had a room full of the pictures of infants. Mrs. R. asked her one day, as they had been all her children, and all dead, why she let them hang there? She answered, “It is the same thing between our Saviour and me, whether he has them, or I have them.” This is a great saying; yet it is, in fact, no more than we are daily praying for—“Thy will be done!” It is soon said; but, when the will of the flesh is opposed, it is not so soon practised. Indeed, submission to God’s will is an almighty work, which you know as well as I do, and perhaps feel more of it at this time. But, through the Spirit of Jesus, when we feel this rebellion, we are commanded to look to “our Father which art in heaven.” In Christ he is ours—his fatherly love is ours—and he can do nothing but what is for our good. And his opportunity of manifesting it is chiefly when his will goes one way, and our will goes another. Then we are forced to look up for his promised strength, and we generally find he appears most for us. He tries faith, purifies it in the furnace, continues it in the fire, that patience may bring fresh experience; and experience improves that hope which never makes the believer ashamed. See these truths most beautifully illustrated in the case of David: I never read it without getting some good from it, for there one sees before

one's eyes that faith and patience may have their perfect work.

W. R.

LETTER XVII.

Letters to J—— I——, Esq. with several to Mrs. I——.

Dec. 14, 1782.

MY good Friend,—I never was more obliged to you than for your Christian sympathy with us in this time of need. It is a great trial; but it is the Lord who has a right to do what he will with his own. It is *my* Lord, *my* old Friend, who changeth not in his love: he has acted for his own glory, and has done the best: what would I more? Nothing, but his grace to make me submit to his sovereign will: and that, blessings on him, he does now freely vouchsafe; for I feel a will of my own quite opposite to his. I could wish he would have spared my son; my soul delighted in him: he was a sweet youth. The remembrance of his person, and manners, and behaviour; his dutifulness, for he never offended me but once in his life; his conduct since he was in the army,—these draw tears from mine eyes while I am writing. I do feel as a parent; I am no stoic: but, thanks be to my good God, his grace conquers nature. The struggle is hard, but God is with me, and through him I conquer myself: he forces me to go to him every moment for his support and his comforts. I have no stock of resignation. It is out of myself, laid up in the fulness of Jesus; and, while I live upon him for it, he helps me to kiss the rod. He

keeps under my rebel will, and teaches me to say from my heart, "Not my will, Lord, but thine be done." Such is the kindness of my Jesus, for which I adore and worship him.

My poor wife has exquisite feelings on this occasion. It is her constant prayer not to be suffered to displease our Lord by her murmurings. However willing the spirit may be to kiss the rod, yet the flesh is weak. The tender bowels of the mother rise and struggle, but the power of grace prevails. In the midst of her greatest floods of tears, she would cry out,—“Lord, keep me, Lord save me from thinking or speaking any thing contrary to thy holy will.” And he was very good to her, her faith was supported.

W. R.

LETTER XVIII.

Feb. 1, 1783.

MY very dear Friend,—I take the first opportunity of answering your friendly letter. You have full credit for all your professions of mourning with those that mourn; we believe your sympathy, and we bless God for it. The prayers of our friends for us have been heard and answered. Mrs. R., considering her feelings, has been very graciously dealt with; kept at the worst from murmuring, and generally calm and composed. We had friends many, and from them prayers many: but, you know, that when two strings of an instrument strike a unison, they are in concord; just so was it with Mrs. I.'s letter; it was then, and is still, in unison with Mrs. R.'s spirit. It sounded a concord; it met the very

sentiments of her heart, and became, not a prescription, but an effectual medicine to her wound. It was not a letter about the balm of Gilead, but it brought and administered the healing virtue. It does not at all lessen Mrs. I.'s real friendship, but more endears it, that God gave to her words so great a blessing: they came from love, they have increased love, and to this moment Mrs. R. never speaks of them without great thankfulness. I am commissioned from her to bless Mrs. I. for her kindness.

You are very obliging in wishing us at Brislington, but my circumstances are such, and my helps in preaching so very few, that I cannot think of so long a journey. My work is great, and the night will soon come when it will be over: I wish to be faithful and successful these few hours of the evening which are left. If I see you not face to face, I am still in office, your constant orator: my Lord will hear much of you, and I will please myself with the persuasion that I shall often meet you at his throne. I invite Mr. T. to give me a meeting there; the oftener the better.

Our word for this year was Judges vi. 24. "Jehovah Shalom," Jehovah is our peace. It was something remarkable, that it should so soon have a literal accomplishment. Peace being broken between God and man, the breach was made up by our great Peace-maker. The gospel is the open proclamation of it, inviting sinners to be reconciled to God, and to enjoy the benefits of a free trade between heaven and earth. They who are justified by faith are reconciled, and find this peace with God: and, as far as they believe, they enjoy the benefits of an open intercourse with God in Christ; which benefits are

all the graces of time, and all the glories of eternity. I have only to wish that the outward peace may promote the inward; and the Peace-maker himself may get the glory of this, and of all his goodness to the children of men.

My blessing on your dear children; may they be kept for you, and you for them. Mrs. I.'s great attention to them is her duty, and being paid in the Lord, is her privilege. Prayer for success is the chief thing: he only, yea, he only can bless instruction. May the parents and their friends plead much and prevail.

W. R.

LETTER XIX.

June 28, 1783.

SATURDAY morning—I am writing at 6 o'clock—and will go no farther till the doctor comes.

He is come, and says, he hopes there is no danger; but symptoms are not so good as he could wish. Our Master is the Lord of life and death—in his hands we trust our all—He commands us also to do it at all times. I am learning this lesson, and recommending it much. What I know of it practically, puts one into a real paradise: because it puts one, and keeps one, in God's will. He graciously appointed it to be a sovereign antidote against all evil, and to be his ordinance for conveying all blessings: for which reason, I write and preach so much about it. The fulness is in Christ, but there is no hand that can receive any thing from him, but faith: and faith should go as far as the promise—it should trust for

life, the life that now is, and whatever belongs to it, as well as for the next. O my dear friend, let me entreat you to read this attentively, and as the subject requires. I wish you always happy, in all things happy. Christ is the only way to this, and you can get nothing from him without faith, and faith is not doing what it should do, if it does not save you from guilty fears, and from natural fears. Mind the promise—"I will save you from all your sins"—no fear from this quarter: so again, "Lest any hurt you, (person or thing,) I will keep you night and day." No fear from this quarter: almighty love has promised, come what may, it shall not hurt. I harp so much upon this string, because I know you have fears, and they do give you uneasiness; which I earnestly wish to cure. My friendship wants you to be so happy, as to be always rejoicing in the Lord. And yet mine is but a ray of his friendship. Surely then, you may trust him, and not be afraid of any thing. Yea, you may, and you ought to sing—"God is our hope and strength, we have found him a very present help in trouble." W. R.

LETTER XX.

Tiverton, Aug. 20, 1783.

My very dear Friend,—We arrived here through the good hand of my God in safety: by which means I have learned something more of my first lesson; that is, to trust, and not be afraid. What has he to fear, who has cast all his care upon an Almighty Friend—and has done it at his bidding, and on

the warrant of his promise? Every step of our journey spoke aloud—Now you see, he is faithful—he said, I will keep your going out, and your coming in—and blessings on him, he has kept us from all evil. Mr. I. no one has a better title than you have—to trust at all times, to trust for all things. May you live up to your estate—and find your faith working such a love to God on your heart, as will cast out all fear that hath torment.

In my journey I have also met with nothing but what has increased thankfulness. The fine weather, the fruits of the earth, very rich, and ripe, and abundant, and the harvest very near over—these are special mercies, calling aloud for praise. The poor and the rich should alike join, for both are benefited by the present plenty. Wheat, lately nine shillings at this market, was yesterday, the best, sold at five shillings and six-pence. Glory be to God.

I have a magnifying glass, through which I view these mercies, and they appear great indeed. Looking upon them in a spiritual light—O what an improvement! He that has kept my body in safety, has the care of my soul; he has undertaken it—his love, his power, his wisdom are all engaged. And he says to me what David did to Abiathar, “Abide thou with me, fear not, for he that seeks to destroy thy life, must destroy mine first; but with me, thou shalt be in safeguard.” Corruptions, temptations, dangers, pains, may attack and threaten; but faith says—Fear not, his word is past—it cannot be broken—I will preserve thee from all evil—yea, I will preserve thy soul; I will perfect that which concerneth thee.

When this is believed as it ought to be, what a subject of praise! Many, many blessings I have in hand, but they increase by use, and they are but earnest: God gives them as his pledges. Take this and expect greater—the greatest—all my love in Christ—all my heaven. This is but the first fruits—the harvest shall follow. When present mercies are viewed in this light—O how they increase—how they magnify! May every day, as it adds to their number, add also to their value; that in all things you and I may be giving of thanks; of which heavenly employment, nothing can hinder us but unbelief: take heed of that bitter root, and set Christ upon it—mind, he must pardon it and subdue it, or else it will shoot up and flourish. W. R.

LETTER XXI.

Blackfriars, Sept. 14, 1784.

MY very dear Friend,—I received your kind remembrance of us, just before we set out for the north; and attended to your request of hearing from me on the journey; but my yearly engagement would not allow me leisure till this day. I have made it a long time my practice, as soon as St. Dunstan's lecture is over, to begin reading my Bible, and I let nothing take me off till I have read it through. Yesterday I finished my delightful task; and having blessed my God for his precious word, I take up my pen to write first to you. The impressions left upon my heart in this last perusal, are so warm and lively that I cannot help communicating them to you, and wishing

that you and Mrs. I. may feel the same. My admiration has been increasing of the uniformity of the Scripture plan. It is the great charter of grace, and all the parts perfectly harmonize; and when one compares them together, each illustrates and beautifies the whole.

The reading of 1784, has also given me a fresh confirmation of the truth of Scripture. I am not more certain of any thing, than that it is the word of God, and the revelation of the most High: and of this I am convinced, by finding the power of God accompany it. As in the first, so in the new creation—He speaks, and it is done; his word is almighty. I know of no power beyond that which he has put forth in your heart and mine. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth. Our new birth is a new creation; and, blessings on him, I feel the effects of this every time I take up my Bible: I find it to be more than the word of man. It is in truth the word of God; because it effectually worketh to this day in them that believe. Its influence in the heart and life is beyond all created power: and the experience of God's real presence in and by his word, has made it to me very precious. On this last reading, my love for it has grown much in taste and value—in taste, sweeter than honey; in value, more than gold, yea, than much fine gold. As I dig deeper, the mine becomes rich, and the treasures of grace are greatly enhanced by their being the earnest of glory. O what a book is this! what is any way like it! I cannot get enough of it. You know it is a good sign of health when people long for their meals: so it is in the mind. I have but just done

reading, and yet I want to begin again: my appetite is keener. Feeding upon the word, is not like the gross meat and drink of this world—nothing cloying in it: but, when mixed with faith, it refines the faculties, and exhilarates the spirits. The man says, “O what love have I unto thy law! all the day long is my study and my delight in it.”

All these considerations have received great confirmation in my last searching of the Scriptures: because I have got one year nearer to the full accomplishment of all God’s promises. This vastly enhances their value. Yet a very, very little while—and perfection—and eternity will be put to their fulfilment. The word will be completed—perfectly in all its promises—eternally in all its glories. O what a day will that be! What Joshua said, will be matter of fact, Josh. xxi. 25. xxiii. 14, 15. All things in this world, when near, look great. As you go from them they appear less. It is the property of true faith to bring the promises near: as faith grows by hearing and reading, the promises appear nearer and greater. The home prospect familiarizes them, and presents them to our view with fresh beauties. Believe me, Sir, this is matter of fact. The eye affects the heart, and all its affections taste and enjoy the good things of Emmanuel’s land; which, though they be at present in promise and hope, yet the promises of them, exceeding great and exceeding precious, mixed with suitable faith, excite a hope full of glory and immortality.

This view of the Bible is inexpressibly glorious. It reveals. It realizes. It brings into present enjoyment eternal things. It is my constant prayer

for B. friends, that they may be Bible-Christians.
All besides is vanity. W. R.

LETTER XXII.

Nov. 30, 1784.

MY dear Friend,—I am to thank you for your constant kind remembrance of us; for which, giving you perfect credit, you will not be offended that I look higher in my thanks. We ought not to live upon the streams, but they should lead us up to the fountain-head from whence they flow. The bountiful Giver should be acknowledged in all his gifts, whether they come immediately from himself or from his creatures. And this is his way, both to sanctify friendship and to secure it. Most friendships are ropes of sand; they love to-day and hate to-morrow, because they leave God out. But bringing him into all our connections with one another, he renders them holy, and thereby lasting. Indeed, this is the life I am wishing and trying to make some daily progress in; and truly nothing else is worth living for. You may safely write vanity on all worldly comforts, if they be not spiritualized. But God in them exalts, ennobles them, and turns their cold water into rich wine: to his praise be it spoken. I have supped in Mrs. N.'s room on bread and cheese and cider, and it was fulfilled, "So man did eat angels' food." Your grounds are pleasant: walking alone to converse with God, they have been turned into a paradise. How many, many times has it been with me as with Isaac! He went out to pray in the field at

the even-tide; and, while he prayed, he lifted up his eyes and saw Rebekah. He asked, and had: how infinitely gracious his promise! how infallibly faithful his performance! Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear. My dear friend Mr. I., this is really something of heaven; a blessedness that I wish God may add to all your other enjoyments. It will multiply them, you will have two in one; and what no estate, no relations, no comforts can give. This will do you good at your latter end, when they must all fail. One from whom I wish to learn this lesson, reduces it to this point: 'I have set the Lord always before me; always at home or abroad, in company or alone, writing letters or reading them, eating or drinking, sleeping or waking, sick or well—sick unto death, yea, dying, I would still be looking to Jesus. It is my safety, my privilege, my happiness, to do all in his presence.' So his example teaches. So his Spirit will enable you and me to follow his steps. As believers we shall be aiming at it, and trying daily to do it better; for when we are reconciled to the Father, and at friendship with him in his Son, we ought then to exercise our faith and hope in him on all occasions. What do we trust our souls for in his hands, if we do not trust our bodies? How do we cast all our care upon him, if we do not live in perfect dependence on him for our children and families? He has the government of church and state upon his heart and upon his shoulders. O why then do we doubt of his managing both for the best! He has undertaken the care of seed-time and harvest. How injurious is it to him to burden ourselves with his

own proper business, especially when he says, "Cast thy burden on the Lord!" But it is bad weather: he appoints cloudy days as well as sunshine. I quiet myself in his will, be it wet or fair, and thereby enjoy a sweet calm, when the face of the sky is tempestuous, and the wind stormy. Although of late he has been so gracious in his providence, as to give us such fine weather as no man living remembers in October and November; saying, as it were, 'Trust, and be not afraid: if you have a wet cold summer, I will give you summer weather in winter.' I reckon twenty-four fine days in October, and twenty-two in November. What a God! I admire his goodness to a set of people who are at every turn murmuring at, and affronting him for his management of the weather. This present autumn should silence all such complaints. And when the winter comes in earnest, cold, and frost, and snow, and north-east winds, they all fulfil his word. Thereby they exercise faith, and improve thankfulness. Lord, lift thou but up the light of thy countenance, and it is midsummer. I can assure you, Sir, that these are not only realities, but also blessings to be enjoyed, and I wish you to partake richly of them. The Lord's presence will brighten your fair days, and will enlighten your darkness. Troubles come, he will make them big with mercies: death comes, he will be with you: and dying, by his grace, shall only be the entrance, safe, pleasant entrance into life everlasting. O my Jesus, teach Mr. I., teach Mrs. I. this blessed lesson! Lead them from faith to faith, that every day, and in every thing, they may have a growing dependence on their God and their Saviour. There

is something so blessed in this view, that I know not where to stop or how to end. And should not, but I am called upon to remind Mrs. I. that Mrs. R. sent the things some time ago, and hopes what was for Louisa and the chain answered. She paid for them all but the carriage. Take notice of this in your next for her satisfaction. They talk of peace, but we are not ripe for it. Great trade would over-set us; and prove a natural intoxication. I heard the bishop of Worcester, a Christian bishop, preach at Bow church, and he called it "the insatiable spirit of trade." So, I think, a Christian with food and raiment is a happy man. Having many things to say, I must leave some to the next opportunity. I shall forget my right hand when I forget you and yours.

W. R.

LETTER XXIII.

Jan. 1786.

MY dear Friend,—I am often with you at Mont-pellier. I behold your clear sky and bright sun; and I can feel some of your bracing air, and your constant fine weather. I do rejoice in them, because you do; but truly, Sir, I do not wish myself in your place! Although I am happy in your happiness, yet there is something even here at Blackfriars, far beyond the south of France; for we are not without our enjoyments. I live in an element, and when my sky is clear, and my sun shines bright, and I feel some of its warm beams, and I breathe its pure ether—these are real blessings; they come down from

the Father of lights—gifts like myself. He gives his Spirit to enlighten and to enliven our spirits, that, being one with his Son, we may live upon his fulness in earth and heaven. And when this spiritual life is enjoyed, there is a failing somewhere, if its influence does not extend to the body, and make the whole man better. My Physician prescribes for both: he speaks a peace and a calm to the inward man, which reaches the springs of animal life, and makes them move with delight: the nerves feel it; they are brisk and active: he puts joy into the heart, which does good like a medicine. No doctor like mine, Mr. I. you have made use of him for your soul, but I would recommend him to you for the life that perisheth. What if you should leave off physic, and forget your skill in it, and live more by faith for the present life, I could infallibly insure the success. There is a something not to be described that he gives, which operates according to promise, and by a divine power, witness Rom. xv. 13, &c. &c. Take a little specimen of our testimony for him in the year 1786. Our motto has been generally Hebrew. The present was, “I am Alpha and Omega:” Alpha is the first, Omega is the last letter of the Greek alphabet. So Christ is the Beginning and Ending, and all between from first to last. He is all in all, Rev. i. 8. saith the Lord himself, the God of truth, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the great I AM, from everlasting to everlasting, the Almighty, Jesus the God of nature, the God of grace, the God of providence, the God of glory. He is the first author of all the divine works in creation and in providence, the first cause of all the di-

vine works in grace and in glory: he is the beginning and the ending; all things are made by him, and for him.

Blessed are they who have begun the new year looking to Jesus; they will find in him every thing they can wish to save them from sin and misery, and to make them truly holy and eternally happy; for blessed are all they that put their trust in him. We are come together this morning to devote ourselves afresh to his service, and to begin the year as we hope to end it, in the faith of the Son of God. He is our Alpha and Omega; and yours, I hope, and Mrs. I.'s. I will give the heads of our subject, the rest your own meditation will supply.

1. He is Alpha, the God of nature, who created all things in heaven and in earth, see Col. i. 16—19. Psalm cii. 25, &c. Every thing that exists, (excepting sin,) owes its being to Jehovah Jesus; for he is of the same essence, has the same attributes and perfections with the Father. This truth stands upon a rock, and is the foundation of our faith, namely, that Emmanuel, the God-man Christ Jesus, is the Alpha and Omega of our salvation.

2. The God of grace: for as he is the Lord God Almighty, what could be wanting in his life to make his obedience for us an infinite righteousness; or in his death, to render it a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for sin? And the benefit of his life and death can come to you and me in no other way, than as an act of the freest grace; and we cannot receive it by any other means than by believing the Father's testimony concerning his Son. Are we wise unto salvation? It is the teaching of our great Prophet

Jesus; he is the Author and the Finisher too of that faith, by which we reap the fruit of his atonement and of his righteousness, and by which also we enjoy all the graces of the Spirit in earth and in heaven; as John i. 16. And, amongst the rest, a life of sweet dependence on him for all temporal things; for he is,

3. The God of providence: when he has taught us the safety and happiness of trusting our souls in his hands, he calls for the exercise of this, by leaving our bodies, and all their concerns, with him. He calls for it—"Cast all your care upon me for meat, and drink, and clothing: I will provide. Trust, and be not afraid, I will manage your health and comforts, yea, I will make sickness and troubles real blessings." O Sir, this is paradise; it is the believer's present heaven. He lives by faith at all times, and for all things, bad and good, sick and well, poor as well as rich; in all, he has fellowship with Jesus, who satisfies his heart, that he loves him too well to try him with any thing but what is for his good. This is a sovereign antidote against all temporal distresses, and really turns them into spiritual blessings. It is our philosophers' stone. I pray God you may find it, and thereby enrich yourself with all you want, as well as all you have; yea, with the unsearchable riches of Christ: for he is,

4. The God of glory, lengthening his grace into eternity. For this he gave himself unto death: it was to purchase for us eternal life, as you may see John xvii. 20—25. In this prayer I wish you and the family an interest. Pray for yours, in our dear Lord,

W. R.

LETTER XXIV.

July 5, 1787.

My dear Friend,—My sisters have pressed me sore to pay them another visit; to which we have complied.—When we shall return, I cannot determine—perhaps time enough to meet you hurrying away out of our blessed country. However, be assured of this, that I shall be much with you, very much, under my favourite elm, sitting and surveying the house and premises, and praying for the blessing of the God of heaven upon the master, and all his. Indeed, Sir, you have a most bountiful benefactor, who has loaded you with benefits; and he is never weary of giving: the greatest of his gifts he bestoweth liberally—even faith, rich faith, that you may take his Christ, live closer, nearer still unto him, and may be safer by him, and happier in him. This prosperity is much upon my heart: I wish it truly; I ask it fervently. All other things prosper about you, may your soul prosper. As your real friend, studious of your best interest, let me just put down what would have been said—If the hall lectures had been delivered at Brislington, 1787, by W. Romaine, chaplain in ordinary, morning and evening—How often have you heard me say, “Make sure of Christ,” he is the one thing needful, all besides is nothing worth. Pursue what you will of this world, attain too ever so much, you only get a great estate; vanity at its best—in the enjoyment, vexation of spirit; and in its duration, passing so fast away, as not to

be worth one farthing when compared with Christ, and the eternity of his heaven.

You should be often reading your warrant in Scripture, and your encouragements from thence to take him, and make sure of him for your own. The Father's revealed will and command, 1 John iii. 23.; the Son's express declaration of his willingness and power to save all that come unto him, John x. 27—30.; and the testimony of the Spirit runs thus: Heb. x. 15—24; a wonderful passage, full of strong arguments to silence all your guilty fears, and to encourage you to live and die in peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Then comes the security of this evidence, Christ *is mine*. I have taken him at God's bidding; I depend on God's warrant; I make use of him, as I am commanded. The Father hath given him to be a teacher: when I read the word, I look up for his Spirit, that he may make me wise unto salvation. When I feel guilt, I quiet my conscience with the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. When temptations meet with corruptions, he gives me courage to oppose, and strength to overcome them. When the miseries of sin are present, the love of God in Christ turns them into blessings. In my walk, in my warfare, in my duties, in my friendships, in every thing, I live by the faith of the Son of God; whereby a man may be as certain that he is alive to God in Christ, as that he is alive to this world. Mr. I. there is no freehold like this, both for the certainty of its evidence, and also for the blessedness which it brings with it. Make sure of Christ, and all is yours. Faith in him pleads a lawful discharge under

the broad seal of heaven, from all sins and from all miseries. Here is the warrant, see the Judge's own hand—I will remember them no more. And with this there also comes a full conveyance, by deed of gift, of all possible good in time and in eternity. The title is infallible, the earnest is present possession—even the Spirit; and faith, which is the fruit of the Spirit; and the fruits of the Spirit, which are abundant through faith in Christ Jesus. Grace is yours—glory is yours; for the God of grace and glory, God in Trinity is yours, and will be yours with all his fulness for ever. May these be your summer enjoyments, even fellowship with the Father and the Son by the Spirit. W. R.

LETTER XXV.

Jan. 31, 1789.

MY dear Friend,—The pleasure which I received from your letter, calls upon me to acknowledge it, which I sit down to do with much thankfulness. I get good from your good; and am wishing you may return to us as much better as possible. We have had cold weather, but it was very healthful, and to me very pleasant. Our air was very putrid in autumn, but the frost has taken away every thing infectious: our skies are now as salutary as yours in France; and we want nothing in England but to be more sensible of our privileges, and more thankful for them.

You know me well. I am a man of one book, and of one sentiment. The word of God, and faith in his word, make up all my learning, and enter into

ny life, private and public. The practice of the principles for the year 1789, was taken from *Isa. lxxvii. 1.* "The Lord reigneth"—my Lord is, whose kingdom is of such a nature, that England, and the multitude of its isles, may be glad of: because he is almighty; the Creator of all things. He did but speak, and his word brought them into being; he did but command, and they were upheld by the word of his power; for all things are owing to him to this day. And he is the almighty Jesus, Lord of the spiritual and new creation, in which his word is always doing wonders: behold, says he, I create all things new; I give the Spirit of life to the dead sinner to enable him to believe in me, that he may never perish for his sins, but may have, by my gift, eternal life, and I will keep him by my almighty power through faith, till I bring him safe to the fulness of my joys. This is the great King, who has all power in heaven and earth, the God-man Jesus; and the exercise of this power is peculiar to himself. He makes and keeps the new world, as he did the old. He governs by his word. The sceptre is the sceptre of his sovereign authority. He drives them out from Zion, as *Psalm cx. 2.*; and the rebellions were made willing to submit to him: and to this day he gathers in his subjects by the same means. When his Spirit puts life and power into the gospel, the sinner hears his call, and comes, and bows before Jesus: he believes, and is pardoned and saved; henceforth he lives by and upon the fulness of the Saviour. This is the way in which he populates his kingdom; and whenever he brings any one to be a willing subject, he promises them such blessings

under his government as the world has not to give; and the world, I can witness for him, is not able to take away. Faith gives him credit. And according to our faith, he fulfils his promises, and makes us really blessed. Here you see, Sir, I get upon my own ground—living by faith—the only happy life. An emperor has nothing to be compared with it, whether you look at the blessedness of our King's subjects, as they relate to spiritual, to temporal, or to eternal things.

His name, his office, his character of old was, the Blessor of all nations: so that his subjects are as blessed in him, as Abraham was to whom the promise was made. The Blessor himself is theirs—his life is their righteousness—his death is their atonement—his resurrection is their justification to life—his ascension is their hope of being with him, and sitting with him on his throne. O what do they feel, when from their hearts they can say—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings! May this be sweet music at Montpellier.

And then as to temporals, though he be so great a King, yet he is not above looking to the least concerns of his subjects. The very hairs of their head he numbers:

“ If in the least he be so true,
What won't he in the greatest do?”

He has redeemed the body, as well as the soul; and he says, ‘ Cast all the care of that upon me.’ But I am sick, ‘ Fear not, I am your physician—I can bring health out of sickness. As to food and

raiment, family, children, substance—trust them all in my hands,—if you leave them to my management, come what may, I will make it work under me for your good: and if one thing be better than another in this life, you shall have it; for I have said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.’

He who says these things, is King of kings, and Lord of lords: I believe his royal words—and I am as happy about all temporals, as I can be out of heaven. May he make my dear friend as happy; that, looking forward, when we shall see the King in his beauty, we may one day meet, and cast our crowns together down at his feet. So be it. May he reign sole monarch of our hearts till that blessed day.

W. R.

LETTER XXVI.

Feb. 8, 1792.

My good Friend,—We have consecrated a day of thanksgiving to the Keeper of Israel, who kept your going out safe; and thank you for informing us of it. We hope, before the sun gets out of Aries, he will favour us with another holiday, for bringing you back in peace. Till that happy time arrive, I reckon it my privilege to be daily with you in spirit, and to be keeping up the communion of saints, which is as real a blessing upon earth as it will be in heaven: for believers are all united to one Head, have one Spirit breathing through them, and enabling them by one faith to cleave close to their Head; and, as far as they do, he disposes and enables

them to cleave close in brotherly love to one another. I have you as much upon my heart, while you are at Montpellier, as when I sleep under your roof at Brislington. Prayer for every possible good to you and yours, and praise for the blessings you have received, are truly my present employment: I find it also delightful to remember you before my Lord. May he make it as pleasant to you to read, as it is to me to inform you, of our religious engagements here in the present year. Our word was, "Grow in grace." Growth is the end and design of receiving it; and the only purpose of living another year is, that we may get grace in it, and use it. If we have it not, that we may seek until we find it; and if we have it, that we may improve it: for it is as necessary as breath to the body. The Scripture compares it to a cool breeze after a hot sultry day, and also to the dew upon herbs: grace is as refreshing as dew, and as strengthening and bracing as the cool air is in hot weather. When it is saving, it is the favour of the blessed Trinity to sinners who are quickened by the Spirit of grace, and brought by him to believe in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and thereby to the enjoyment of the Father's grace and love. In the Trinity it is always the same, and also in the Scriptures; but as to our sense and experience there is a growth, by more dependence on God's faithfulness to his promises, and more dependence on the supplies of the Spirit, in applying and making the promises good. Thus, he who grows in grace this year, (as it follows in the text,) will grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: the more he knows of him, the more he

will trust him: and he who trusts him most, will certainly love him best; and he who loves him best, will be using all the means of grace, that he may grow in the sense of his favour; the love of Christ will constrain him powerfully to do what Christ loves, to bear patiently Christ's cross, and to persevere in fighting Christ's battles; always remembering, that if we have ever so much, Christ giveth more grace.

This was the sum. Reflecting on the past year, the believer should be greatly humbled at his little growth,—on the present, setting out in Christ's strength to get forward—more dead to nature, and more alive to grace. Our activity, usefulness, holiness, happiness, depend on our growing into Christ, and daily making such a progress, that we may get more grace to return him more glory.

LETTER XXVII.

Jan. 23, 1793.

My dear Madam,—I am much beholden to you for your speedy answer to my inquiries, and for good news, and for much concerning our friend abroad, and friends at home, very dear to you by natural bonds, but much more by that nearest of all relations, the bond of the Spirit. I acknowledge with thankfulness, the many favours of God to you, and am at prayers for the continuance of them—that he who has begun a good work, may carry it on to perfection, in your sister, brother, and all your children. Where there are fair buds and blossoms,

may they not be blighted, but bear rich and ripe fruit that will endure unto everlasting life.

In return for your good news, I am happy that I can send you some of mine—indeed some of the best which ever came from heaven. It relates to a person called Melchisedec, which was our word for this year, of whom great things are spoken, Gen. xiv. and Psal. cx. such as can belong to none but the Lord God: and now they are talking of putting down all kings, I thought it high time to look after a kingdom that cannot be moved: and such I have found in this name, as the apostle has explained it at large, and given us a whole chapter upon it, Hebrews vii. He says it means the King of righteousness—King Jesus, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, and has all power in heaven and earth to make his subjects righteous. He is the Lord their righteousness—almighty to pardon their sins, almighty to subdue their sins and all their enemies, and almighty to give them faith to trust him for salvation, and for all the things which accompany salvation. Happy subjects, who, being justified by faith, have peace with God, and who live under his government safe and happy. They do not live up to their privileges, if either guilty fears or natural fears distress them. When kingdoms are convulsed, states are overthrown, and the civil world turned upside down, the feet having got into the place of the head—then he says to the weakest of his subjects, ‘Fear not lest any hurt you, I will keep you night and day; under my protection you are as safe as if you were in heaven.’

There was a great deal said of this most blessed

Melchisedec, which I need not repeat—you have heard his praises celebrated so often by me, and long before in the word of God, Psalm xlv. and in that famous hymn, Isaiah xii. We only want more faith to make him more precious, and ourselves more happy. Let this be our study, and on him may our hearts be fixed through the present year. The government is upon his shoulders, the greatest concerns, and the least. May our King, for his eyes and care are every where, look on our travelling friend, and keep him till we meet in peace. May you and yours find it a faithful saying, recorded of his subjects, Psalm cxii. 7, 8. and then you will prize and love Melchisedec. W. R.

LETTER XXVIII.

Reading, Aug. 3, 1793.

MY dear Friend,—I was just going to write when your letter came this morning, Aug. 3d. We had agreed to set out for B. Tuesday the 27th, and hope to be with you the next day. I wish to live under an abiding sense of the certainty of death, and of preparation for it. Thank God, I feel the truth of your reflections, and I know in whom I have believed. Just on the verge of eternity—O it is a blessed prospect to be able to look forward with a hope full of glory and immortality: it makes age, with its numerous infirmities, not only tolerable, but truly blessed. To live in the Lord, is heaven upon earth; to die in the Lord, is the heaven of heavens. I am a witness for Jesus, how happy it is to live by

faith in him; and Jesus himself is a witness how happy it is to die in faith: so he assures us—"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." He who spake it with a voice from heaven, has never broke his word to one dying believer; and he will not to you: trust, and be not afraid. Cordially yours, W. R.

LETTER XXIX.

Jan. 4, 1794.

MY dear Friend,—When I saw your red wafer, before I opened your letter, my heart leaped for joy; but when I read the contents, I blessed his holy name, and gave him all the glory. It is his own doing; and, indeed, it ought to be marvellous in our eyes. The more he makes it so, we will join prayer to praise, and beg of him, that whatever was his gracious purpose in his late visitation, it may be completely answered, and Mrs. I.'s body and soul may be better for it. O what a Jesus do we serve! with what confidence may we trust him who bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up! And he gives us full warrant: Trust in him at all times, ye people—pour out your hearts before him in the prayer of faith; God will be a sure refuge for you in the distresses of life, and in the hour of death. In this delightful exercise, methinks I hear our friend—What return shall I make unto the Lord for all the benefits that he hath done unto me! I will offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord. O that I may answer his gracious purpose in raising me up again, that I may

grow in grace, and in the knowledge and love of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: to him be glory both now and for ever. Mr. I. stands by, and says, Amen—for I know his feelings: he is blessing his God, who has favoured him with such a gift, has now, as it were, redoubled it, by continuing it: he is praying to be made, and to be kept thankful, that every sight of Mrs. I. may stir up gratitude and praise in his heart to a bountiful Jesus. O! if ever I take my seat in the hall to worship again, may our meeting be something of heaven, and our praises like theirs above. What mercies! how great—how many! I believe Miss I. knows how to value, perhaps much better than I can, such a parent restored to her. She is sensible of the signal favour; and I pray with the same warm heart Miss I. may thank her God. I would hear her do it: O what a blessing to me, that my dear mother, who loves me as her own soul, and is the safe guide of my youth, should be raised from such a bed of sickness, and spared to me and to my sister. I wish to praise the Lord for this his goodness; and to show him my thankfulness in word and in deed. So be it.

You have friends to join you: I know some who are giving glory where it is due, and begging of God that the family and relations, and all your connexions, may be profited by this visitation. May increasing health inspire increasing gratitude. I hope my Lord will take especial care of your own health, and be the guardian and defender of our country. I am at prayers. My chief concern in the times is with God: let him do what he will, believers will be safe, as in the ark, as in going through

the Red Sea. Yea, they may sing the 46th Psalm, as I do this day. Your friend in the Lord, W. R.

LETTER XXX.

Feb. 1, 1794.

MY dear Madam,—I have many reasons to rejoice with you, and join my praises to him who hath done such great things for you, and will do greater still. He has restored your life from destruction—health is returning—and spiritual health is returned. O how did my heart rejoice, far more than for any thing outward, when I read of God's abundant grace to you in giving you a thankful spirit! For this is spiritual liveliness, and spiritual growth. I could not help taking up these holy words, "I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. We sought the Lord, and he heard us, and delivered us from all our fears. Blessed, blessed, most blessed be his holy name." Do I not hear you say, Amen?

I have observed the public mind too much agitated about the signs of the times: and my own friends rather uneasy about what was coming upon the earth. Come what may, I have always an infallible antidote; and I gave for the word of this year—"The God of Hope," Rom. xv. 13. This is one of his high styles and titles. The God from whom believers in Christ may hope for all possible

good, and to be saved from all possible evil. Such are his promises; and faith looks at the truth of them, and hope waits for the fulfilling them, not doubting but that God is faithful. This is his character, "a promise-keeping God." And may he render this year famous for the exercise of Christian hope—well-grounded—sure and certain—built upon immutable things—and bringing the words before us into happy experience,—even that the God of hope may fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost.

This hope is his gift; a grace of his power; the fruit of believing. Whatever God has promised, be it ever so great, ever so much, he enables the believer to hope for its accomplishment, and to wait God's time. If it be for sin—being justified by faith, he gives peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Peace in the sense of pardon, and peace in the sense of favour, that he has brought us into a state of favour, and that we stand in it with the fullest security of the word, promise, covenant, and oath of the holy Trinity, that we shall be kept unto the end. This is the hope which never maketh ashamed. All worldly hopes may disappoint, but this cannot, Rom. v. 5. The believer looks at sin, and triumphs, Rom. viii. 31—34. looks at the troubles arising from sin—for they all come from it, and he carries on his triumph, Rom. viii. 35. to the end. He looks at death, and still is happy, for he has hope in his death, Prov. xiv. 32. He looks beyond death to a God of hope. He looks for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, with a hope full of glory and immortality, Psalm xlviii. 14. Titus i.

1—3. Jude 20, 21, 24, 25. This is the sum and substance, of which you can make the application. The word and Spirit of God encourage us to trust and not be afraid—for he is faithful who promised. Is this my hope? Have I begun the year with waiting thus upon God? It is very high worship, and the most honourable that can be to God's promises. O for many, many such worshippers: they need not fear the raging storm threatening destruction to the earth. They have embarked all their hopes with their Almighty Jesus; and he has engaged to bring them safe to the haven where they would be, as you read, Heb. vi. 16—20. The prayer that ended the sermon comes down to Brislington. And Mrs. R.'s love, with mine, to you all. W. R.

LETTER XXXI.

April 19, 1794.

My dear Friend,—I was made to believe, that I should have seen you face to face long before this; and your last letter gave me some hopes of it: but I wait no longer. You cannot think how much I was flattered by your account of yourself, because it was a demonstration of the truth of my principles, which you have so often heard from my mouth, and have so often under my hand. You see he can keep you any where, every where, when duty calls you. He can make England a very paradise; so it is to me—all but heaven. How well has our God carried you through the winter—found you work—fitted you for it—given you health and strength;

and what is better still, spiritual health and strength to thank him, and bless his dear name ! O ! may every heart in your family, and every tongue in it, ascribe with gratitude Mrs. I.'s recovery, and your own particular mercies, and the dutifulness of your children. May HE have all the glory. It is from him that the voice of joy and health is in the dwellings of the righteous; and to him I look with thanksgiving for making you a witness for my old doctrine. O it is a blessed thing to trust him ! He promises, and he will make his word good. Trust in him at all times, ye people, and in all places : they shall want no manner of thing that is good. But now I have got upon this subject, I must stop, for there is no end of it; the triumph of faith is the everlasting joy of heaven. I hear Mr. T. has undertaken great things this Easter: I wish his strength may be equal to his courage,—both mine continue, very marvelously in mine own eyes. I labour more than ever, sometimes to the weariness of the flesh ; but my friend gives me rich cordials, and I go on, aiming, as he helps me, to magnify and exalt God-Jesus. He has poured out a very remarkable spirit of prayer, and multitudes, multitudes through the land are on their bended knees, lifting up holy hands, crying for mercy. I hope he will hear and answer, by granting us a national reformation, that iniquity and infidelity may not be our ruin. Mr. William Jones has just printed a sermon on the Man of Sin : it is very interesting—I wish you to read it.

The times are still tempestuous, and the poor church tossed on the waves like Noah's ark; but not one embarked with Christ shall ever perish. They

may suffer shipwreck, but as it was, Acts xxvii. they all got safe to land. I am in the ark, and hope it will soon be so with me. To this most blessed Pilot I commit you and yours. Do not forget in your best moments, your fast friend and servant in the Lord,

W. R.

LETTER XXXII.

Aug. 9, 1794.

My very dear Friend;—We were in Buckinghamshire for a fortnight, and did not receive your letter of the 25th July till August 6th; nothing else could have hindered me from not answering it sooner, especially as your motions depend so much upon it.—I look forward with prayer, that it may be made a happy meeting to us all. “As iron sharpeneth iron, so,” &c. We want much encouragement from the warnings given us of our uncertain stay here. Age preaches, “Be ready;” infirmities second the lesson: the state of the world cries aloud—wars, tumults, cruelties never heard of before. The state of the church also is alarming, more than any thing else. Philosophy with its vain deceits—Infidelity, with its natural children, a swarm of most profane practices, destroying all subordination to God’s ministers, and to God’s magistrates, whom he has set over us that we might lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. These evils are growing worse and worse, especially as none can tell when they will stop, or how. How earnestly should we endeavour to strengthen one another’s hearts and

hands in the good ways of God, when we see all these things come upon the earth. I keep in my watch-tower, looking to him for his gift of repentance and reformation to a guilty land, that iniquity may not be our ruin; and thanking him for his special favour, that there is a sanctuary out of the reach of all dangers, and that we, of his mere grace, are in it; described Isaiah xxvi. 1—4. Do not cease to pray for
W. R.

LETTER XXXIII.

Oct. 9, 1794.

My dear Friend,—In the midst of this great storm, which rages through Europe with unabating fury, what a blessing to enjoy a calm within! a quiet conscience—a happy heart—a true paradise! Let the hurricane spread, and threaten to carry all before it; yet you can recollect what is said of a righteous man—“He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord: his heart is established, he shall not be afraid.” This is the haven of peace, into which he has entered, and is safe, whose anchor is Christ—all with him is sure and steadfast. Come what may upon the earth, even the great day of the Lord, instead of fearing any thing that can hurt him, he may, he will, lift up his head with joy, and triumph in the God of his salvation. May this be your portion when most wanted.

Our stay here will be short. We paid you the longest visit we have made this summer. It is continually sounding in mine ears, “They sorrowed

most of all, because they should see his face no more," &c.* It is certain, at my time of life, we cannot promise ourselves, on any good ground, a yearly visit to our friends. Our meetings must be before God—in the prayer of faith for them, which is the communion of saints; and praise to him for brotherly love with its heavenly fruits. I hope to visit you with my last and dying testimony of faith. I go to town sooner than usual, that I may put my *Triumph of Faith* to the press. And then, my good God favouring me, you will read, and I trust will be a witness, that "blessed are they who live, and most blessed are they who die in Jesus." To him I commend you, and Mrs. I. Miss I. and dear Louisa, with the blessings of Jesus on you all. W. R.

LETTER XXXIV.

Nov. 14, 1794.

Yes, poor L. is dead; and he gives us warning. One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to the place where he arose. His sun is gone down. Yours and mine are setting. What a comfort! our day's work is done, we are walking as children in the light, and waiting to be sent for, whenever our Lord pleases. It need not be a violent death. It must be soon, in the course of nature. It may be in a moment. Come ever so soon, it will be a blessed time. When, and where,

* Mr. Romaine visited the friends and country here alluded to no more, being called to his rest in the ensuing summer.

and how, all is settled by him who says to you and to me, "Fear not, I will be with you," &c.

I have nothing to do with the times but in the way of prayer. Grant us peace in our time, O Lord. So I ask, and keep on asking, although it seems to be farther and farther out of sight. Thus the prophet prayed, "O thou sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? Put up thyself into thy scabbard; rest, and be still." To whom it was answered, "How can it be quiet, seeing the Lord hath given it a charge to take vengeance, and there is no repentance, nor turning from their crying sins?" The Lord grant iniquity may not be our ruin! I have time to pray for Louisa. I hope he will hear and answer, who is my friend and yours. Mrs. I. and Miss have much occasion for faith and patience: I pray for them, that they may find grace to help them in every time of need. Very soon, yet a very little while, and faith and patience will be no more wanted: till that time, may they do their perfect work. I am very busy printing my dying testimony for the truth of the gospel of Jesus, and for the power of it. If you live to see it, you will know somewhat more of his unspeakable grace and favour to

W. R.

LETTER XXXV.

To Mrs. B.

Brighthelmstone, Oct. 14, 1764.

GRACE be with you, my dear friend, and with yours. Upon hearing of the late mercy which you

have received, I found my heart rejoice in the Lord, and my faith in him strengthened. Surely his compassions fail not. He is all faithfulness and truth. The mercy which he has promised, he will fulfil to a thousand generations, and none who trusted in his promised mercy ever were or ever will be confounded. I had no doubt of this in myself, through his good hand upon me; but by his dealings with you and yours I am more confirmed, and learn to trust him more. May his great kindness to you have the same effect. May it bring you to see more clearly that you are in Christ; and as you learn to trust and to depend more upon him, you will thereby get more out of his fulness. And this seems to me to be the end and purpose for which a believer lives. He is in Christ, and he is suffered to live a longer time, that every new day may bring him to a more settled dependence upon Christ. His faith is to be always growing and getting some fresh establishment in Christ. So we read of the Thessalonians, in the first epistle, their faith was so famous, that it was spoken of throughout the world; and yet afterwards, in the second epistle, it is said, their faith had grown exceedingly. It was not only kept alive, or at a stand, but also increased, being renewed day by day by the word and Spirit of God: under whose teaching, the believer attains more large views of the covenant of grace, of the unchangeable faithfulness of the eternal Three in their covenant offices, and of his safety in relying upon their making good to him every covenant mercy. Thus seeing all things well ordered and sure in the covenant for his acceptance, through the finished work of Jesus, and for his holy

and happy walk through the almighty grace of Jesus; whatever could bring him to God; and keep him near to God, all provided, and all made over to him by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should lie. On this foundation resting his soul, his conscience is at peace, and he grows daily more sensible of his being in the favour and love of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in their covenant offices, and gets more comfortable evidence of their acting in each for his good. And as his faith thus grows, whatever opposes him in his walk, becomes more easy to overcome; because he sees all fulness of grace and power treasured up in his dearest Saviour, and he knows it is there for his use, and he there goes for every thing he wants; and, by daily sweet experience, finding the faithfulness of Jesus, he grows bolder, and has more freedom to go to him. He learns not to be discouraged by what he feels in himself, be it what it will, but he carries it to the Lord. And when he makes use of Christ's promised strength, and relies wholly on it, to subdue corruptions, to conquer enemies, to overcome difficulties, to deny self, and to bear the cross, then all things go well. So long as he trusts in the Lord, the Lord makes him to prosper. The devil cannot come at such a person but by attacking his faith, and he cannot conquer him till faith gives way; and his faith will not shrink, because God keeps it, and with him he trusts faith and all, looking up to the Lord to keep him by the power of his might. O happy man this, to whom the Lord saith, "I will preserve thee from all evil!" and he saith, "Lord, I believe thy word, and on thy power alone do I depend to preserve me."

To whom the Lord saith again, "I will bless thee, and thou shalt lack no manner of thing that is good."

True, Lord, so I find it. What good thing lack I yet, now thou art mine, and I am thine? Thou hast taken all my evil upon thyself, and thou hast given me all thy good. In having thee, I have all things, only I want more faith. O that I may glorify thee more, by putting more trust and confidence in thee. Still, Lord, increase—still, day by day, let it be growing—a growing faith increasing exceedingly, until I receive the end of my faith, even the salvation of my soul.

I kept writing on, thinking these things, which are the joy of my heart, may, in these retired hours, rejoice yours also. May the Lord convey them to you with that life and power which I feel now I am writing. I am a poor creature, the poorest of all. Yet Jesus is mine. In his love, and by his sweet constraining grace, I am yours, W. R.

LETTER XXXVI.

Brighton, Sept. 30, 1795.

DEAR Mrs. B.'s servant salutes her in his wife's name, being appointed to answer her letter.—You want to receive something from us, which breathes the air of Canaan. Is not Jesus Canaan itself? Is he not the breath, the light of life; the bread, the water of life; the garments of salvation; the everlasting feast of joy and gladness of that blessed country? While we talk of him by the way, as we are travelling to it, we not only breathe the air, but

also enjoy the good things of Canaan itself; for when Jesus dwells in our hearts by faith, we then have possession of the promised inheritance. Our Jesus is all of it to us. Having him we have it all. Canaan is a wilderness without him. The finest place you can conceive would be no heaven, if Jesus was not there. And wherever he is, there heaven is; as the court is where the king is. "Whom have I even in heaven, but thee?" said blessed David. And one full of the same Spirit placed his utmost wishes in being present with the Lord, which he knew was best of all. Our heaven, you know, my friend, is not the place, nor the fine things in it, gold and silver, and precious stones, but it is Jesus, our matchless, loving, lovely Saviour. His presence is to us the fulness of joy.

The common notion of heaven is very much like the Turks' paradise. Writers and preachers generally make it a most glorious place, full of the richest things; and they take care to tell us, there is no pain there, but all pleasure. So it is. But what sort of pleasure? Why, to be with the Lord Christ, to see him face to face, to see him as he is, to behold the glory of God in the person of Christ Jesus, according to our Lord's prayer, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." This is the highest enjoyment, to behold his glory. They have nothing above this in heaven; and of this, faith has some very sweet foretastes below. When the Spirit has drawn our hearts to Jesus, then he gives us daily, by our fellowship with him, happy earnest of the glory which shall be revealed; and we cannot

rest till with open face we behold it. All he gives us here only whets the appetite, and makes us wish more for full and perfect enjoyment; as one sweetly sings of the beatific vision, which is the sight of Jesus,—

What we here taste of thy rich grace,
Makes us long more to see thy face;
We hunger more, and thirst to see
The heaven of heavens, Lord, in thee.

If this be the language of your heart, you are indeed breathing the air of Canaan, and partaking, according to your present capacity, of the good things of it. The heir of that promised land is your Saviour, and with him you are an heir of God, and a co-heir with Christ. Your Hebrew verse proves evidently, that you are one of these happy co-heirs: because you are longing for more sweet breathings and heavenly gales of grace, coming from, and drawing you to Jesus, and thereby assuring you more of the promised inheritance. There are certain means appointed for these purposes, of which, while we make use, may their end be answered in your soul and mine. And

The first is, the word, which is the ministration of righteousness, that exceedeth in glory, being the righteousness not of a creature only, but also of God; for therein is this righteousness revealed from faith to faith. The word is a revelation of the glory of this righteousness of God in the person of Jesus Christ, discovering to us the Father's grace and love, in placing the fulness of this righteousness, with all its fruits, in his co-equal Son; and the Spirit's grace and love, in testifying and glorifying of this fulness,

and in bringing the believer to rest safe, and live happy upon it. This is the subject of both testaments, which we shall be studying night and day, and meditating on it with love in our hearts, until we get within the veil, and want no more love tokens, and kind promises, from our heavenly Lover—he being then ours, with all his glory, in full and never-ending fruition. Here I take shame to myself for reading so little of this precious treasure, which breathes throughout the perfumed air of Canaan. Learn, my friend, from my sad experience, and when you read more than I have done, mind,

Secondly, That you read in a constant dependence upon the inward teaching of the Spirit of Jesus. The word is the ministration of the Spirit, by which he is administered, and with which he acts; for he is to the word, what light is to the eyes. Let a man have ever such good eyes, he cannot see any thing with them unless he have light: so the word must have light shining upon it to make us see it in its clearness, and feel it in its power. When he opens the eyes of our understanding, and enlightens them to understand the Scripture, one cannot help admiring and adoring what light he throws upon them, and what life he puts into them; for he renders them the power of God unto salvation. Then one gets up to Pisgah's top, and not only fine prospects of Canaan's fruitful hills appear, but also her spicy odours perfume the air, and bring us rich foretastes of that good and gracious land. O for more of this Spirit in you and me! He is the very breath of life to quicken the word. With it in your hand, and him in your heart, you will have the inspiration

of the Almighty, and your present knowledge will be but like infancy, compared to that maturity to which he will bring you : for,

Thirdly, The word of God, thus explained by the Spirit, will make this material world breathe the air of the spiritual world. The things that are made were therefore made what they are, on purpose to represent and to convey ideas of the invisible things of God. Every outward object is a picture of some inward object: for none of them were made for themselves, but were to reflect and give ideas of something else; namely, of Jesus, and of his spiritual world. Here the Scripture philosophy becomes a vast help to a spiritual mind: it represents the world, and all things in it, as mere shadows, and informs us what the true object is which each of them stands for—so that the philosophic mind looks through the sign to the thing signified. Thus all nature preaches grace. Every object speaks something of Jesus, and you cannot open your eyes without being told something of him.

Many are the advantages of viewing things in this light: such as a continual increase of knowledge. The understanding improves by every object, as it learns to spiritualize every one of them: and it is kept close to the truth; for whatever presents itself to the eye, carries its right instruction to the eye of the soul, and thereby becomes profitable to our spiritual and eternal interest.

Temptations are kept out: for they all come from not seeing objects in a true light. The enemy misrepresents, and thereby deceives. Whether he tempts the eye or the heart, he cannot cheat them, but by false colours and lies.

The world is kept out: for the spiritual man cannot fall in love with shadows, which all things here are. The whole creation is but a picture, the body and substance is Jesus and his kingdom.

The principal advantage is, conversing and having fellowship with Jesus in every object, of which we know the time, nature, and use. When we sit down or walk by the way, eat or drink, or rest, see heaven above with its furniture of sun, moon, &c. or the earth beneath, with its creatures, its products, &c. every thing has a tongue and reads a lecture concerning Jesus. This the spiritual Psalmist heard when he calls upon all things animate and inanimate to join him in praising his Jesus—and a blessed concert they make. My heart has been ravished with hearing the heavens declare the glory of God, and the earth, and all that therein is, echoing back again loud praises to his glory. I cannot walk into the garden, but flowers and fruits tell me to praise my Jesus. In the fields I am told of him, and that not fancifully, as a sportive imagination may make something out of nothing, but the Scripture informs me what such an object represents, and the sight of it raises the spiritual idea. So that, whatever I rightly understand, it speaks to me of Jesus, and reminds me of something relating to Jesus, and to his kingdom. Then, my dear friend, Canaan is kept in view, and we always breathe its pure air. And that incomparably glorious Jesus, who makes Canaan what it is, grows better known, and more beloved. He is become my one study, but I am a very dull scholar. What I have learned, is but just enough to make me count all but dross for him; so much

remains still to be learned, he being an infinite, and an everlasting good, that I am pressing on. O how my heart longs for more of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord! And as I get some little advance, fresh views of his glory sink me to the dust. My vileness is most felt in his clear light. The more precious he grows, the more humbling views I get of myself. As Christ rises, self falls. May you find it so, and the more you do find it, so much the more will you breathe the air of Canaan. I know not how to stop, but my paper, against my will, wont let me go any farther.

W. R.

LETTER XXXVII.

Lambeth, Jan. 26, 1768.

My dear Friend,—I received your letter of the 8th instant; in which there was the state of your case. I see nothing singular in it. Scarce a day happens, but I meet some or other in your condition, with exactly the same complaints arising from the very same cause. And I have convinced many a one, through the divine blessing, of their interest in Jesus, from the very arguments they made use of to doubt and question it. Were I to draw the true character of a believer, I would put into it every single circumstance that you mention in your letter; and I would undertake to prove, that it made strongly for you, and nothing of it against you. It is the very frame and temper of a real Christian. Just as you describe yourself, is every one that is born of

God—feels the very things you do, and is never right when he does not feel them; it being the proper work of the Spirit of Jesus, to bring all that are under his teaching to be content to be exactly what you find yourself, that you may be led to live out of yourself upon the fulness of God-Jesus. He is teaching you this lesson, that he may glorify the Saviour in you. But you are a bad scholar like me; slow to learn, ready to forget, and, what is worse, apt to pervert the divine instruction. You misapply, and put vile constructions upon the teaching of the Spirit of God, and give a legal turn and cast to his lesson. I can see, as if written with a sun-beam, the disposition of your mind herein, and can trace, from my own experience, all the turnings and close windings of your present temptations.

I observe what you say of your judgment. You are enlightened to see that Jesus is all in salvation work. The covenant ordered in all things and sure, this is all my salvation, and, as far as I know my own heart, this is all my desire. You unsay these words in the same breath you say them; for, because you are not always satisfied with this salvation, or always alike comforted with it, or with equal happiness enjoying the glorious fruits of it, you therefore doubt and reason about its being yours. Thus you argue: "My judgment is clearly convinced, and my heart desires to be cast wholly upon the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, but in the act of doing this I always fail." What reasoning is here! How directly contrary to the spirit of the gospel! For you are looking not at the object of faith, at Jesus, but at your faith. You would draw your comfort, not

from him, but from your faith. And because your faith is not quite perfect, you are as much discouraged, as if Jesus was not a quite perfect Saviour. My dear friend, how sadly does the sly spirit of bondage deceive you ! For what is your act of believing ? Is it to save you ? Are you to be saved for believing ? If so, then you put acts and works in the place of the Saviour. And faith, as an act, is, in your view, part of your salvation. The free grace of the covenant you turn into a work, and how well that work is done becomes the ground of your hope. What a dreadful mistake is this, since salvation is not to him that worketh, but to him that believeth !

But besides this mistake, I can see one of the greatest sins in your way of reasoning, and yet finely cloaked under a very specious covering. I pulled it off, and behold there was rank treason under it, against the crown and majesty of my Lord and God ; for you are kept looking at your act of believing. What is this for ? Why, certainly, that you may be satisfied with your faith ; and being satisfied with it, what then ? No doubt you will then rest in it, and upon it, satisfied now that Christ is yours, because you are satisfied with your faith. This is making a Jesus of it, and is in effect taking the crown of crowns from his head, and placing it upon the head of your faith. Lord grant you may never do this any more.

I observe, thirdly, how, by this mistake, and by this great sin, the sin of sins, you are robbed of the sweet enjoyment of the God of all comfort. You lose what you seek, and lose it in your way of seek-

ing. You want comfort, and you look to your faith for it. If faith could speak, it would say, I have none to give you, look unto Jesus, it is all in him. Indeed, my friend, it is. The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, will not glorify your faith. He will not give it the honour of comforting you. He takes nothing to comfort with but the things of Christ—and his things, not as used by you, but as given from him, who is all yours. This lesson, I think, he is teaching you, although you pervert it. He is bringing you off from looking legally at your faith. He intends you should not regard, as you have done, how you believe, but to settle you in believing. I have been long at this, and have learned but very little. I can say my lesson, but when I come to practise, I find I am a dull scholar. The Spirit of Jesus has been teaching me to draw my comforts, not from how well I believe, but from Jesus, in whom I believe; not from there being no failing in my act of faith, but that I do act faith on Jesus, though failingly. My salvation is quite a distinct thing from any act of mine. It depends on the divine purpose and covenant,—is absolutely and eternally fixed in the divine will—and this is made known to me by faith. I receive the evidence of it by believing, and so take possession. Faith is not the cause, but the effect. The cause is the act and grace of the Trinity,—what the Father out of sovereign love gave; what the Son bought with an inestimable price; and what the Holy Spirit proves to a sinner to be a price every way fully sufficient, and so brings him to depend upon it for his redemption. You see, then, that in consequence of the Father's

giving Christ for me, the Holy Spirit brings me to Christ, and enables me to trust and rely upon him. This is all that faith has to do in the matter. It is the fruit and evidence of the covenant grace of the Trinity. At best it is but an open empty hand, stretched forth at God's bidding, and at God's enabling to lay hold of Christ; but Christ so laid hold of is my salvation. It is not faith, but Christ. It is not my hand, but the thing received into my hand, that saves me. I grant you, and I know it well, that much faith brings much comfort from Christ, and carries much glory to him; but the way to get much faith, is not to look at it, as you do, but at the Saviour; not to look at your hand, but at Jesus; not how you hold him, but that he is yours, and holds you, and your faith too, and therefore you shall never perish, but shall have everlasting life.

After I had observed these errors in your looking at the act of faith, I did not wonder at the following parts of your letter, such as, your not being pleased with your faith, and therefore not pleased with your state, nor your graces, nor your attainments, nor your own righteousness, but you thought every thing made against you. This is still the same teaching of the Spirit, but you pervert it. Have you nothing to look at but Jesus? That's right. Then look unto him, and be saved. What! can you see nothing to rest on of your own? Are you forced to renounce the goodness of your faith, as an act, and do you experience that you cannot be saved for it? Very well: hold fast there. Stick to this: no grace, as acted by you, can save;—follow this blessed teaching, and cleave with full purpose of heart unto the

Lord Jesus. You must learn to make him all in your salvation. He must save you from your faith, as well as from your unbelief; faith, as you act it, being full of sin. If the highest and best act of your faith was to be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, you would deserve a thousand deaths for it. So much corruption would be found in it, that you could not escape the damnation of hell. Turn about then, take your eyes off from your acts of faith—look at Jesus. Expect to be received as a poor helpless sinner, not for great and high believing. Come to be saved from your faith, as an act. Follow, as all your salvation is laid up in him, follow him, take comfort from him, see yourself in him, not for any thing in you; trust him, not yourself, not your acts; and learn to discern spirits, to know divine teaching, by this mark—that what tends to humble you, is from the glorifier of the Saviour.

Since I sat down to write I have been many times interrupted, but I was resolved not to be stopped in writing to-day, that you might, at least, know what could be said of your case. It is a very common one—common to all who are taught of God—so peculiar to them, that, as I said before, if I was to draw the character of a true child of God, I could not leave out one, not a single one, of the circumstances which you bring against yourself. Indeed, Mrs. B. they are all on your side, and witnesses for Christ. O do not then stifle, pervert, nor dispute their evidence. Allow what they say,—your faith is not perfect—your acts fail—all things fail you. Good, very good. Then away with them—cast off all looking at, all dependence on them. Betake yourself to

Jesus, trust him, use him, grow into him, and let nothing separate you from him. So be it, Lord Jesus. W. R.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Blackfriars, Aug. 12, 1769.

My dear Friend,—We had a letter from your sister, giving an account of your journey, (thanks be to him who kept your going out and your coming in,) and of your present situation and trials; in which I can see nothing singular. The lesson which the Lord is now teaching you is plain. His way of teaching it has nothing new; it is the established method in his school, and your averseness to learn it occasions all your uneasiness. When he has made you a good scholar, you will then find relief in your soul, whatever befalls your poor crazy body.

I take it for granted, that you are acquainted with the doctrines of free grace and finished salvation: you are not suffered to doubt of their truth, but you cannot receive comfort from them at this time. Your conscience draws fresh bills of indictment against you. You do not see your interest in your divine Advocate, and therefore you cannot answer them as you used to do. Hence you are puzzled and mourn; are become impatient and fretful; fear this and the other; and are left to yourself, to your sinkings and dejections, and groundless apprehensions; fancied miseries are felt as real, and fancied fears of dying are as bad as death, yea, worse than death will ever be to you. This is something like

your case, is it not? And what is to be done? Where is the remedy? Certainly our all-wise Physician has left some prescription for it, and he can make it, bad as it is, work under him for good. But how? Why, he would teach you now one of his highest lessons, and you are brought into circumstances most exactly suited for your being a proficient in it. He intends in this (as in all things) to promote his own glory as the Alpha and Omega of your salvation, not only in working of it out, for he has satisfied you of this, but also in the security of it; he must have all the honour of the safe-keeping of it—it is for you, and you for it. He is the Keeper of Israel, who keeps all the Israel of God by the power of God; and you cannot glorify him in this his great covenant office, but by giving up your body and soul, you and yours, absolutely to his keeping. And how could you be taught this in a shorter or better way, than by being brought into your present distress? For you now find, that you can no more secure and keep, than you could work out, your salvation. He must do it all; begin, carry on, and finish. This is your lesson. Finding yourself then in this situation, utterly helpless, without any thing good in you; a poor, dejected, fearful, destitute creature—commit the keeping of your soul to Jesus; you will thereby bring him a richer revenue of honour than all the rejoicing Christians in the world. You will glorify his faithfulness to his word and work, by venturing upon that arm of the Lord which is engaged to do all for you, and all in you. Mind one of his sublime styles and titles: He is the Saviour of him that hath no helper. What! have you no help? Do

you feel it? Then the Spirit says, he is your Saviour. Mrs. B. he is yours, as surely as he ever saved any one who had no helper.

But, alas! how weak is my faith! My dear friend, do not look at the *how*; that will only puzzle you; it will make believing to be a work, and will tempt you to be comforted when you believe well, and to be dejected when you are displeased with your believing. You know it is not the degree, or the joy of faith that saves; but it is Jesus who saves, and your safety arises from trusting to the work of God-Jesus, and your comfort should spring from taking it to yourself upon the warrant of God's free offer to sinners like you; not to qualified sinners, but to coming sinners. "Whosoever cometh unto Jesus;" it matters not how he comes, nor who he be, nor what he has been; to him coming, God gives his word, and pledges his honour—"Thou shalt never, never perish, but shalt have everlasting life." Whether he come fainting, live fainting, or die fainting, it is the same; the word cannot be broken, but standeth fast for ever and ever. Mrs. B. fainting, dejected, without spirits or liveliness, comes; she shall never, never perish, says God—she shall have everlasting life.

But what signifies the truth of this to me, while I find no comfort in believing? Your case does not admit of comfort; the Master is carrying you up into a more exalted state of believing, wherein we are to get above baby comforts. You could not learn the present lessons of his love in a comfortable frame; he therefore brings you into the valley of Baca, to teach you what Jesus is in himself, and

that all your salvation is in him undertaken, fulfilled, applied; and that after all your knowledge, and all your experience, you have nothing to this moment to depend upon, but his faithful arm and watchful care. This is his last lesson; nothing is beyond it but heaven. You are left to your present distresses on purpose to learn this. Your dear Jesus lets you feel how utterly helpless you are, that you may find how faithful he is to his promised help. He is as exactly suited to your case, as light is to your eyes; and your relief does not consist in getting comfort again, but in getting nearer to Jesus, and in seeing what he is to such as you, and thereby growing up more into him. Your present frame is to bring you to commit the keeping of yourself and of all your concerns to him. You find you can do nothing; quite lifeless, heartless, comfortless. Very well; but Jesus has undertaken to keep such, and he is now making you willing that he should be your keeper. O that you would not reason and puzzle your poor heart, but follow his teaching: and now simply leave it to him, to do what he will—your salvation will then be as safe in his hands as if you were in heaven.

And why should not you simply trust him? Consider, you cannot honour his office as your keeper, you cannot bring him more glory than others do, but by coming as the weakest of all creatures. You find you are so. Why then, let his strength be perfected in your weakness. You see you can do nothing; let him then have the crown of doing all. What sad work would you make, if your graces or comforts were left to your own keeping! You are learning now to put no confidence in the flesh. O

that you may yield to the Spirit's leading, and may be willing to be just what your God would have you to be!

But how can you do this under these faintings, sinkings, &c.? These are your schoolmasters. You could not learn without them your absolute dependence upon God-Jesus: and you experience these on purpose that you may find how careful Jesus is over you. He has the same love to your soul, the same faithfulness to his own work, when you have no strength, as at other times. He says so: "I change not"—I am the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever—the same to the fainting as to the rejoicing believer. O fall, then, fainting into his arms: venture—cast yourself upon him; for he is a very present help in every time of trouble.

You see I have no more room. I follow my advice with my prayers. I pity you much for what you suffer: but I wish God may let you see it as I do. Still all is well—may you say so.—Read as you can bear it, and pray for light to know, and faith to follow, the Lord's leading. It is a dark night, and a long night; but the morning cometh, and you shall rejoice with the gladness of his people.

W. R.

LETTER XXXIX.

Berwick, near Shrewsbury, Sept. 9, 1769.

DEAR Madam,—We were setting out upon our journey when we received Miss M.'s letter, and have scarce had any resting time since. No opportunity offered till the present, of sitting down to inform you

of my constant remembrance of you in my prayers. My daily petition is, that God may bring you to submit to his will, and to make you lie in his hands, just what you are, a lump of sinful clay, that in his own way he may mould you and form you a vessel of honour. O this is hard ! to flesh and blood it is impossible. To have been, like you, in light, but now in darkness ; to have walked in comfort, but now every ray of it gone ; to suffer the disease, but no feeling of the remedy—who can bear up under such trials ? None can of themselves, but “ I can do all things through Christ strengthening me.” So he said who rejoiced to be what you are : he was not only content to be a pensioner, living on the mere grace of Jesus, but he also gloried in his infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon him. Every infirmity brought him to feel more what you now feel yourself to be ; but this did not keep him from Christ, as it does you : nay, rather, it brought him to greater experience of the power of Christ, in so managing his infirmities as to make them the means of nearer communion and more intimate fellowship.

My dear friend, I must repeat it—Although you tell me my last was a probe, rather than a healing medicine—your present frame is necessary ; you really want to learn the lesson which it is sent to teach you. Without it, how could our great Prophet bring you to live entirely out of self upon his fulness, which, when he is teaching, how do you murmur and repine ? Whatever you knew of this before, it is plain you had it but in theory, for the practice has quite upset you. You cannot believe although the ground of believing stand good, unless you have the

comfort of believing: for, now you are left to yourself, you think you are lost, because you are suffered to feel what a poor miserable creature you are; not considering that, bad as your condition is, yet there is a remedy for it, hope under it, and a good end to be answered by it. There is a remedy infallible, which you overlook at this time, although it be as exactly suited to your case as meat is to the hungry. What! have you forgotten the covenant of the eternal Three—the Father's everlasting appointment concerning those whom he gave to his Son? None of them can be lost. The Son's accepting them as the Father's gift, undertaking for them, writing their names in his book, becoming man, living and dying for them; and, by these his relations to them, he is their Head and they are his members, one with him and he one with them, in a bond which nothing can break; and the Holy Spirit given to them and dwelling in them, to work all their works for them and in them, and to keep them safe by his mighty power, till they be received into glory. This is the covenant of the blessed Trinity, in which it is enacted and provided, that nothing should befall you but what is for your good; yea, that the very state you are in, which is one of the sad fruits of the corruption of your nature, shall be so overruled, as in the end to promote the gracious plan of your salvation. Do you not know, Mrs. B.—do you not believe all this? You do—I am certain you do in theory. I pray you, then, what is it that obstructs your practice? How is it that your present trials, which are working for your good, which must do you good, being appointed and sent for this very purpose, are so mistaken and mis-

applied? You are left to reason against God's covenant purposes, and to pervert (as far as you can) God's gracious design. You may go on indulging this strange temper, but know assuredly, my good friend, that God will not only save you, notwithstanding your vile reasonings against him, but will also make you one day acknowledge that it was good for you, you had been in this trouble; for still there is hope. Hope is grounded upon some promise, and God has not left you without a word of promise to trust in. His covenant, made for you, is ordered in all things and sure. This dark dead frame is ordered; all your nervous feelings, faintings, &c. are ordered; all things, how much you should suffer, how long, till you should be forced to acknowledge God just in his dealings with you. And though you may try to break his covenant, reason against it, indulge your own absurd reasonings, give place to unbelief, yet his covenant he will not break for the sake of your peevishness. No, he will not. It is sure in all things—as sure to one walking in darkness as to one walking in light—always alike sure on God's part, though to your feeling it may look as if he was going to alter it. Could this blessed truth break in upon your soul, and shine in its divine glory, then you would be made to see that your present frame is most mercifully intended to teach you, in experience, the faithfulness of God's covenant; for now you find you can do nothing. What more seasonable, what more comfortable, than to be satisfied that your salvation is in safe hands, and that God is managing it so well that it cannot possibly miscarry? Thus would hope revive, and soon be able to bring in

strong consolation; for you would discover many gracious ends answered by your having gone through this dark, and dull, and helpless state. Depend upon it, good will come out of your distrustful murmurings and unbelieving repinings. God will get a rich revenue of glory, when he has brought you to experience that all your salvation was out of yourself, and to be willing to take it and to enjoy it as the free gift of free grace, in every comfort, in every blessing, both in earth and in heaven. You are put to school to learn this, and to trust God simply; and sad work you make of your lesson—you read it backward. He would teach you, that salvation itself, and every thing belonging to it, is at his absolute disposal; and therefore he keeps you at school, and under sharp discipline too, because you are so dull at your book. O that you may be made to feel all is well! David was once in your case, and he had a blessed issue. So will you have. Read the 130th Psalm, and mark where he begun. He was in the *depths*, and he ended in the *heights*. After the dark and black night, the morning will arise—a morning without clouds, and your soul shall be glad, and rejoice in the salvation of our God. Much, much glory will then accrue to him from your present visitation.

Perhaps you say, ‘These things may be true; but how can I take any comfort from them while I am in my present distress?’ Why not? They are the remedies prescribed of God for your very case, to give you a good ground of hope at present, and to produce the most blessed effects in future. The Lord the Spirit seal these things upon your heart, and may it please him to do it soon. His time is

best; but, for your sake, I would plead with him, lest you should quite faint. But that will not be. You know I do not follow impressions unwarranted by the word. I give little credit to any thing of that kind. But here I have the word on my side, that God will not leave you nor forsake you; and I am persuaded you will soon know you are not left. To my apprehension the clouds are breaking, the storm is dispersing fast; the day-star is dawning, and your own Jesus is rising with the light of life upon your soul, never, never to set again. It is but a very, very little while, and you shall see the King in his beauty as you never saw him before. So be it. Amen. W. R.

LETTER XL.

Blackfriars, Feb. 22, 1770.

GRACE and peace be multiplied to our dear friends at S. Mrs. B., take the light of the word, and behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon you! What were his purposes of grace in giving you to his Son, (admire and adore them,) in revealing them to you by his Spirit, and in bringing you to know your Father which is in heaven? What, but that you might come to enjoy him who is your supreme happiness. You do enjoy him, glory be to his sovereign grace; but pray mind, you enjoy him now as a fallen creature. You are brought back to the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit. The Son was your surety, the Father accepted him in your stead, the Spirit has enabled you to believe

that the Father loves you perfectly in his Son : thus you come to the enjoyment of the eternal Three. But not such as you will have in heaven. . . The manner of enjoying God is different : here it is by faith, there by sense—here by hard fighting, there by constant peace—here sensual are always opposing and lessening spiritual enjoyments, there all are spiritual—here the enjoyment of God is at best imperfect, there it is absolutely perfect. Here, as you are made up of flesh and spirit, sensible enjoyments must be withdrawn, in order to make room for spiritual; the absence of sensible is necessary for the growth of spiritual. On which account I cannot but bless God for you, who takes so much pains with you. He has chosen you to better things than the world has to give. Your portion is not here below. God himself is your portion, and all his dealings with you are to bring you to enjoy him as such. He ploughs and harrows, and takes every method to get a good crop. He rains and shines, sends winds and storms, frost and snow, but all fulfilling his word. His frowns and his smiles have one lesson. Sickness in yourself, in your family, in your other self, are covenant visitations, and speak aloud—‘ Mrs. B., you are the Lord’s, and he wont let you alone; he wont suffer you to settle upon your lees, you must be kept stirring; all peace and quiet would be your ruin; therefore God, even your God, has, in his richest love, weighed out every grain of suffering needful to keep you near to God.’

But why have I got preaching ? You do find it true, I know you do, that the time of living by the faith of the Son of God has always most sweetness

when the life of sense is lowest in its enjoyments. Lord grant you may daily make up your happiness in God, your covenant God and Father, and in those things which improve in the using when all other happiness fails. Amen. W. R.

LETTER XLI.

London, March 7, 1778.

MRS. C. presented me in your name with the brethren's daily words for 1778; for which I thank you, and through it may be often put in good remembrance of you and yours this year. In return, I send you my word.

MESSIAH is one of the high titles of the Redeemer, which, being interpreted in the Greek, is, the Christ, and in the English is, the Anointed. Oil was the instituted emblem of the grace of the Holy Spirit, and anointing with oil was the outward and visible sign of his inward and spiritual grace. We meet with the institution, Exod. xxx. 22. to the end. This holy ointment was to be used in consecrating the tabernacle and all its vessels, and in setting apart certain persons for some great offices. It was unlawful to use it upon any other occasion—whosoever did, was to be cut off from the people. This consecrating unction was used to the tabernacle, which was a type of the body of Christ; and to every vessel of the tabernacle, to show that Christ, and every thing of Christ, was under the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit; and it was used to set apart the prophet, priest, and king, because he was

to sustain these offices. He was the anointed Saviour. His human nature was conceived and formed by the Holy Ghost. Every thought of his mind, every motion of his body was under influence, and that every moment; for he had the Spirit without measure. He had infinite grace to obey, to suffer, to conquer. Nothing could possibly be wanting to render his obedience, sufferings, and victories absolutely complete and everlastingly perfect. We have a demonstration of their full value and acceptance. He died, but rose from the dead. He sitteth at the right hand of the Majesty on high, infinitely replenished with the graces and gifts of the Eternal Spirit, yea, in him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Here is the fountain of all blessings. His name shows not only that he is thus anointed, but means one who has the power to give the unction of the Holy One. He, as head, has it for his members, which is beautifully described, Psalm cxxxiii. The precious ointment poured upon the head of the high priest, flowed down to the skirts of his garments; so does the spiritual anointing. On Christ it was poured without measure. From him it descends to the lowest member. Every believer has his share of its divine influence. The Spirit of Christ is given to quicken the dead. He unites the soul to Christ. He enables it to live by faith upon Christ, and to live to the glory of Christ. And therefore this anointing is absolutely necessary: without it no man can be a member of Christ; for if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. A Christian means one who has received the unction from Christ. The

same spirit which is in the Head is also in the member: for he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit, and is as intimately united, yea, I think more, than the body and soul in one person. This constitutes the Christian. He has actually the Spirit of Christ, whereby he is one with Christ, and Christ with him. Christ dwelleth in him, and he in Christ; or, as the apostle expresses it, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Christ was his life, as truly as any member lives by its union with the head, as evidently as a branch is nourished by the sap received from the stock upon which it grows. The anointing which he receives from Christ makes and constitutes him a real Christian, as certainly as the member lives by its oneness with the head, or the branch with the vine. Our Lord's name, the Messiah, leads us to consider him in this view, not only anointed himself, but also the giver of the same grace—he having received it on purpose that he might give it to his people. By his own command it was first used at Antioch, and it has been ever since the peculiar title of those who profess faith in him, and influence from him.

Many, indeed, have the name without the thing; as a man may be called rich who is very poor. But such are not Christians. They have a name to live, while they are dead. But he who is truly so called, has actual fellowship with Christ by his Spirit. What was on Christ without measure, is on him according to the measure of the gift of Christ. He partakes of the divine anointing. He is called after Christ, a Christian: for he is made alive, and lives, and acts by the same Spirit that is in Christ, who is Head

over all things to his church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

But if it be thus certain, that the head and the members have the same unction, how can any one know it? Should it not be very clear, as it is the thing which makes the Christian? Certainly it should. And the Scripture leaves no doubt concerning the way and means in which it is to be known.

Known by believing: ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. The word is the ministration of the Spirit. We are begotten by it, nourished by it: holding the truth in love, we grow up into Christ in all things.

How is this unction enjoyed? In the same way as known. The influence of the Spirit of Christ keeps up, through faith, communion with the head and members, testifying of Christ, glorifying of Christ.

How is it improved? By daily use we get more faith, more hope, more love to Christ, more happiness in the Father's love in Christ, whereby we learn more subjection to his will and ways.

In this new year, I wish you new grace, fresh unction, yea, may you be every day anointed with fresh oil—much fellowship with him. Your guide—your keeper—your Saviour. I have only time to pray for you and yours. Mrs. R. with real love, wishes you the same unction. W. R.

LETTER XLII.

Weymouth, Oct. 11.

How faithful is our God! he is crowning the year 1777 with his goodness. Indeed he is always the same, love itself—but we change: and for want of continual trusting, we lose many tokens of his favour. Could you, for instance, always build upon this rock, “thus saith the Lord,” how fixed would your state be, hanging on his unchangeable will! how numerous your comforts, depending on his infallible word! His will is only known from his word, and his word abideth for ever. As he has said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away.” Your dejections, sinkings, alter nothing in God—nor in his will or word. And they come to teach you this. May you learn to renounce leaning to self, good or bad: and may you ever build on the rock that is higher than you. For it is Christ the rock of ages; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. We say, when the sun revisits Virgo, then we shall revisit you. But a thousand unforeseen things, besides death, may hinder us from meeting any more upon earth. Our visits are short. They disappoint us. We are apt to expect from them what is only to be found in him. We bear the pain of parting, in hopes of meeting again. When he visits once, it is for ever: not with continual comforts, or abiding presence, but with a promise—“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee:” the faith of this will make

your mountain sure, when every thing else says it will be cast into the midst of the sea. Only believe. Having a little of that faith which worketh by love, I can feel how the members, under the same head, sympathize. Distance makes no difference. The head is in heaven, the members on earth : yet one Spirit breathing through both, they rejoice and mourn together ; which is heavenly friendship. O for more of it in human hearts ! I am not without it to Mr. B. and every one of your family. If it be right, I could wish you a sky like ours, without a cloud—a voyage through life like ours, a sea like glass, without a ruffle : but be it as it may to-day, to-morrow—a sky without a vapour, a sea like glass, smooth for ever and ever, will be your happy lot. There we shall meet, and bless the kind hand of our Jesus, for mutual, as well as for personal salvation. You know there is nothing good you wish yourself or yours, which Mrs. R. does not wish you as well as

W. R.

LETTER XLIII.

Blackfriars, March 30, 1778.

My dear Friend,—I am glad the Lord wont let you alone. He is very kind to you, and takes a deal of pains to make you a great proficient in his school. He has put you into the upper form, and you have but one lesson to get, and that he will teach you himself. You must have no undermaster. He wont suffer it ; not only because they are incapable of teaching this hard lesson, but also because he will

have all the glory of it. "If any man will be my disciple, let him take up his cross daily, and follow me." The cross is the badge and honour of discipleship. He puts it on. He instructs in the true way to take it up, in the right method of bearing it, and he gives all the profit which comes from it. I have prayed him to teach you how to follow him. And as he has you now in his hands, prayer for his blessing is worth all the fine lessons in the world. Indeed they are apt to do hurt; because they take the eye off from his hand and his rod, and incline us to hearken to reason more than to faith. It is one great design of the cross, to bring us to have nothing to do with any person or thing, but with Christ alone: he sends it to wean us from the world, reason, sense, and self. O blessed cross, which deadens us to them, and makes us more alive to Jesus! May every cross have this effect upon you. Remember, just so many comforts as you have, so many crosses may you have. The cross grows out of the comfort. The dearer the comfort, the bitterer the cross. What a large provision have you for suffering—husband, children, substance, friends, farms, servants, &c. &c. The good Master sees how desirous you are to go to heaven with this and the other comfort: you think he might very well spare it to you, being such an infinitely loving Jesus: you might keep it, and yet keep his love. But he knows better than you do what is good for you: he loves you far better than you do yourself, and he will manifest it to you: yea, you shall feel in your heart, that his almighty love can bring you good out of evil, and pleasure out of pain. Now he wants to com-

municate this. At this very time he is training you up for it. He is going to bestow upon you some of his choicest favours: and he has such a certain fixed way of giving them, that I know his mind and will as plainly here at London, as if I was at S. and you was to tell me all your thoughts: for indeed I find him very communicative to his friends. He keeps nothing from them. And the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do?" &c. No, Abraham is of my court, and I will make him of my cabinet. The same Lord has said to you and me, "Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends," &c. John xv. Our divine Teacher still makes known to us what he doeth. It is your business and your happiness to wait on him for the discovery of his will in his present dealings with you, that you may be able to do it, or patient to suffer it. This he expects of you. And may all within you say, from a feeling submission—"Lord Christ, not my will, but thine be done."

I am thankful for the grace given to Mr. B.—may it increase and abound yet more and more. I am
yours, W. R.

LETTER XLIV.

To the Rev. Mr. K.

April 11, 1789.

My dear Brother,—The famous Dr. Johnson declares, "that a man of genius may force himself to write whenever he pleases." If he found it so, I

do not. I cannot even write a letter when I will; if I could, Mr. K. would have received an answer before this time. Indeed I do not wish to be of the Doctor's mind; for I find the activity of our nature is a perpetual temptation to look upon ourselves as something. It seems to me safer and better to feel that every exertion of mind and body depends upon the grace of another—life, and breath, and all things. Say, here is a fine garden; but who planted it? Say, there are fragrant flowers; but unless the north wind awake and the south come, what is there to make the sweet spices thereof to flow out? The soul is as much dependent on the fresh supplies of the Spirit, as the body is upon breath; so that the feeling of my poverty is my only riches, and the sense of my weakness is my only strength. If I write a letter, if any good accompany it, I wish ever to ascribe the praise to Him, without whom, "we," says a blessed man, even we "are not sufficient of ourselves so much as to think one good thought." What possibly can be more humbling? And what can be more opposite to the Doctor's spirit? Let him, and such, plume themselves upon their self-exertions; but we have learned Christ better. In his school we know that the humblest is the highest; and he does most for Christ, or rather Christ does most in him, who is sensible, that without Christ he can do nothing. This is the Christian principle of all our activity, because through Christ strengthening us we can do all things.

Upon this ground I thank you for your letter, as I have already thanked him who enabled you to write such a letter. And upon the same ground I

compliment you on your sermon,* which is the first in time; and, without being a prophet, I foretell, that it will be the first in many other senses. Blessed be his holy name who sent us such a cordial from S. Indeed it greatly refreshed my spirits; and my partner desires me to tell you, that she partook of my joy. We also rejoiced together in the account you gave of yourself and family. How great, how many mercies—mercies upon mercies, in what you have, and what you have not, God himself being your portion! His will becomes yours; not yours, as it is the will of the flesh. This is still the same, and will be as long as you breathe: but he makes the flesh bow to the Spirit, and enables the renewed heart to say, and truly, “Father, this is a sharp stroke, but I know it was sent in love; as such I kiss the rod—thy will be done.” Glory be to him who gives grace sufficient to bear with patience, yea, to improve with profit, our greatest trials, even to sacrifice our Isaacs. Oh, he is faithful, as you can witness, to that sweet abridgment of his gospel, when rejecting the outward ceremonies, as nothing availing unless mixed with faith, Psalm l. 14, 15.; and a little lower, “whoso offereth me praise, glorifieth me.”

Your letter just came up to my wishes, for its being so very particular with respect to your own family, and to the T.’s. It is a great favour to me, who am now only a chamber-counsellor, to know the circumstances of my friends, their children, and families, that I may advise, and pray for suitable

* A most excellent sermon on the king’s recovery.

grace. You give me fresh matter to ask for yourself,—success to the preached gospel at Southampton. May he help you always to give your people good food, and to bless them with an appetite, that they may be nourished, and grow thereby up into Christ Jesus, and that in all things. W. R.

LETTER XLV.

To A—— D——, Esq.

MY dear Friends,—For so you are in the Lord; in that bond which he ties, and none can untie. Thanks to Mr. T. for his letter, and for his kind remembrance of us. We are, as to outward things, just as you left us; but I hope not at a stand in spirituals—moving still, and getting on, halting, and creeping slowly, but surely. How this is to be done, in what way, means, and method, would save you a deal of time and trouble, if you were quite satisfied. I will give you a little plan of what I call

——'s DAILY WALK.

I had observed a great deal of my time was spent—and most of it quite lost. A very, very little was left. I saw the necessity of husbanding it well, and of making the most of it. This led me to settle and determine a fixed rule of living. “Here is a new day—What lies before me to be done? What do I live for to-day? What am I now to propose to myself, as the end and aim of all my actions?” This matter was brought to a point. And I was made to

see that these, and these only, were the things I was to do :—

First, I was to look to my conscience, that the peace of God might rule in it always, and by all means.

Secondly, I was to look to my heart, that it might be happy in the love of God ; and,

Thirdly, I was to watch over my tempers, my walk, and my conversation, that I might enjoy the peace and the love of God.

I saw my main business concerned my conscience, how guilt, fear, and unbelief, might be kept out of it, and the peace of God might be maintained in it. If conscience be good, all is good : and that is a good conscience which witnesses to the truth as it is in Jesus. Conscience is that faculty of the soul which compares my heart and life with the holy law of God, brings me in guilty for transgressing its precepts, and leaves me to suffer its just penalties, under guilt and condemnation. The gospel offers a perfect righteousness to satisfy the precepts, and an infinitely valuable atonement, the sacrifice of God, to satisfy the penalties of the law. By believing in this righteousness, and in this atonement, the conscience is saved from guilt and condemnation, yea, acquits and justifies the sinner, and brings in a true verdict for him. It says what God does : pleads its discharge under the broad seal of heaven, and stops the mouth of guilt and unbelief, with these words written in golden letters in the royal charter of grace : “ Thou art forgiven all trespasses ; thou art justified from all things ; thou art a son of my love, and an heir of my glory, through faith in Jesus my beloved.” Here

Mr. D. I triumph. I believe these words on the divine testimony. My conscience bears witness to their truth. It is a good conscience; it agrees with God, and looks upon him as reconciled perfectly. It fears to dishonour him, by calling in question the infinite value of Christ's righteousness and atonement, or doubting of their being mine, while they are freely offered to me, and while I find my want of them, and have any dependence upon them. Thus the peace of God rules, takes the lead in the conscience, rules always, the offer being always the same, the righteousness and atonement of Jesus always the same, my want of them always the same, and mine interest in them always the same,—which I daily learn to maintain by all means, against all corruptions, enemies, and temptations, from every quarter. Tell Mrs. D. from me, that this is her first lesson in the school of Christ. When she feels any thing wrong, she is low, her sins displease, her duties cannot please her—tell her that these very things, if rightly managed, will establish her conscience in the peace of God. Every new day she lives to learn that she has nothing to trust to, but the atonement and righteousness of Jesus, and therefore to depend on God's being in friendship with her, an unchangeable friendship through Jesus Christ her Lord. O that her heart may be sprinkled from an evil conscience and mind. That is evil which refuses to build its peace on the life and death of our Emmanuel; and that is a good conscience, which has peace with God through faith in Jesus, and expects all the love of God freely in him. This is my second work, to keep my heart happy. And this I

constantly experience, when the conscience is on Christ's side, and testifies aright for him. God is reconciled. He is my God. We are agreed; and now we walk together. He bids me call him Father: he has bowels of love and fatherly affection for me. He sees me in Jesus—loves me, yea, blesses me in him. My title is clear to all spiritual blessings, because God being my God in Jesus, all things are mine. My happy walk is in the belief of this, and in the enjoyment of it. I do not aim at getting any new title to my heavenly Father's love, but new enjoyment. All is mine in title, but I want more and more possession. Every day I am seeking to know more, to enjoy more of the riches of the Father's love in Jesus: and I find no way to come at them but faith, and no way to increase faith so effectually, as to keep the peace of God ruling in the conscience always, and by all means.

Observe, Sir, When you want to enjoy the love of God, and in the enjoyment of it to find your heart happy, look at nothing to bring it you but Jesus. Read your share in it, take possession of it for nothing done in you or by you, now or at any time, but only for and in Jesus; his atonement, his righteousness, being your constant title to the love of his Father and of your Father. Thus walk with a reconciled God. Christ is your way. Christ your end. Go on leaning on Christ every step for strength—relying on Christ for victory over corruptions and enemies, whatever within or without would try to stop you in your way—trusting Christ for blessings, whatever can keep you safe and make you happy all your way, making his company and

presence your heaven here, as well as in glory. Thus the true believer walks with God; and the sense of his being a child of God, and the experience of his Father's precious love, makes him happy. And this mortifies the carnal heart, crucifies worldly tempers, subdues creature-love: God in Christ enjoyed being the death of every selfish affection.

Pray tell Mrs. D. of this. If she would daily walk with a happy heart, she must learn to make up all her happiness in the love which God has for her in his dear Son. She must look quite away from her graces, her gifts, her righteousness, her duties—God does not love her for these—he loves her in his Son; and she, in believing this, is to find all her salvation, and to enjoy all her happiness. I know her temptations, and therefore go on to the

Third and last thing, which enters deep into my daily walk; and that is,—How my tempers are to be regulated, and my conversation ordered, that I may night and day enjoy the peace and the love of my reconciled God and Father. I find this very hard work, because it is so hard to keep peace in the conscience, and the love of God in the heart ruling always. But God's Spirit is almighty to teach this lesson, and to give power to practise it. And I cannot deny him his honour. What I have learned of him, has been chiefly from this scripture—"Walk humbly with thy God." He is my God: I walk humbly with him in Christ as mine: so his sweet peace is enjoyed, his happy love possessed. While these rule in the conscience and in the heart, the power of the Spirit maintains his influence over the tempers, and over the life and conversation, and he

keeps all in subjection to God-Jesus. The conscience says, 'I will have nothing to do with anything for salvation, but the righteousness of Jehovah-Jesus, and his atonement on the tree.' The heart says, 'This is all my desire.' Hope says, 'I have cast my anchor on Jesus, I cannot be disappointed.' Fear says, 'I would not for the world offend my God and Father.' Then the whole man bows in subjection to Father, Son, and Spirit, and says, 'Lord God, rule in me, rule over me, guide, keep, bless me and mine all the way to heaven.' You see, my good friend, from whence I draw my safety and my happiness—not from self. O no : but from God in Christ. I look not at—depend not on, not in the least, myself—but wholly on my God. Whatever is of mine own, and comes from myself, shows me the necessity of walking humbly with my God. Self consists, as I feel to this hour, of wants, miseries, temptations. These do not stop me, but help me to walk more humbly with my God. They show me my constant want of salvation, and keep me constantly dependent on it. No failings in duty, no sense of indwelling sin, keeps me from my reconciled God and Father, but brings me to walk in nearer fellowship with him. And seeing that all is of his grace and mere sovereign love, pride is hid—every high thought is brought down—and the Lord Jesus alone gets all, it is his due, all the glory. This is my daily walk, a little sketch of it : but enough to let you see that I have to do with nothing for the peace of my conscience, the happiness of my heart, the conformity of my tempers and walk to the will of God, but Jesus—his Father's love, and my Father's,

witnessed by the word, and made mine by believing; the end of my walk is not to get, not to procure a title to, but to make good, and to enjoy my title to his love in Jesus. I learn, and am learning to look at him. Look unto Jesus—may you do it more than me, and then you will get on faster than me to heaven.

W. R.

LETTER XLVI.

To Mrs. P.

Blackfriars, Feb. 10, 1773.

MY very hon. Friend,—I thought myself greatly favoured by your long and kind letter. Many circumstances concurred to make me thank God and you for it. Your acknowledgments to me are over payment; especially as they prove that the great pains which the Lord had taken with you were not in vain. Indeed I believe they were not. Your trial was sharp and long—very, very grievous to the flesh. And only he who bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up, only he could have carried you through it. His almighty grace supplied you with patience; suffering and bearing was then your exercise. Now this is over, profiting is your lesson; and it must be the same grace that produces the blessed fruits that grow upon the cross. O for a rich and plentiful harvest of them in your soul! I would set my wishes before you for the improvement of a recovery from sickness, not from dry precept, but from a winning example. It is not the worse for being

ancient, but mellowed and riper. I had it from the east, and set a great value upon the manuscript. The author is yet unknown. I have the original both in Hebrew and Greek. If critics were to form learned conjectures, and to raise arguments from the style, they would very likely give it to John Chrysostom; because he was a sickly man, and it is so very much in his manner of writing. But, however, the sentiments are so agreeable to the canonical Scriptures, that it has been put, although apocryphal, at the end of the Hebrews, and entitled the 14th chapter; because, I suppose, the noble army of sufferers, mentioned in the former chapters, were of this spirit, and made just such an improvement of sickness as is here described. For my own part I can only say, that it is perfectly agreeable to the views which I have of a believer rising from a sick bed; and such as I wish to find in experience, if ever I should be so tried. Upon my reading it over just now, it warmed my heart, and drew tears of joy from mine eyes; for I am well persuaded, the dear Physician, life-giving Jesus, is exactly such as he is here described. O Mrs. P. I can wish you nothing better than more acquaintance with your best friend. Do not, Madam, pray do not be shy of his company. He loves familiarity. Be free, be intimate with him. Nothing can please him so much. Converse with him as you would with your own husband, and be assured he will tell you no lies. You may safely believe every word he says. You may venture your soul upon it, for it is all gospel. It is the truth of God, infallible, unchangeable. It is for want of knowing him, that you now and then are tempted to

think that he says more than he will make good. O no: He is truth itself, and also the Lord God Almighty. Believe, only believe, and you will certainly find a performance of those things which have been spoken by the Lord, and by us his servants to you. You are within the reach of my prayers, and I would not wish to forget you in them; as long as you and I are upon praying ground, I would be ever making request for you. God make you what he would have you—that is, an humble, happy believer!

W. R.

LETTER XLVII.

London, Feb. 4, 1786.

MR. S.—We are come together this morning to devote ourselves afresh to the service, and to begin the year as we hope to end it, in the faith and fear of the Son of God; for he is our Alpha and Omega. And he is all between the beginning and the ending. He is the self-existent Jehovah, who was, and is, and will be, the first cause, and the last end, of all beings and things. For he is the Lord God Almighty; and as such we take him this new year to be our Emmanuel, that we may live by him, and on him, every moment, and for every thing. For he is the God of nature: the God of grace: the God of providence: the God of glory. First, He is the Creator of all worlds, Psalm cii. 25—27. explained, Heb. i. 10.; as also Col. i. 16, 17. He has the same essence, same attributes with the Father, Isaiah xlv. 6—8. and by taking our nature,

God and man in one Christ. He has every perfection to fit him to be, secondly, the God of grace: a proper surety to act for us, by completing all his covenant engagements with the Father; and having, by his most holy life, wrought out our righteousness, and, by his infinitely precious death, made a full and perfect satisfaction for sin, he is the Almighty Giver of all his grace. He has it all in his fulness: a Prophet to teach the ignorant; a Priest to pardon the guilty; a King to govern the helpless: and, sitting on a throne of grace, he is able to bless the miserable even with all spiritual, yea, and with all eternal blessings. May he be more glorified this year than ever. He is the God of all grace; and we ought to grow in grace, by our settled dependence upon him for the concerns of this life, as well as for a better. It is our privilege, and we should find it our happiness, after we have trusted our souls in his hands, to trust our bodies, and all that belongs to them, in his hands also. For he is, thirdly, the God of providence. He has the ordering and directing of every person, and every event. Not a sparrow falls without his notice. Not a hair of our heads but he numbers them. He interests himself in the very least, as well as the greatest concerns of his people. And, on this account, believers should exercise their faith in every action of life, and they would find, that by trusting in him for all things, they would have a spiritual use of, and profit from temporal things. I have left my all to the care and providence of my Almighty Friend; he will manage for me better than I could for myself. My health, my circumstances, my family, children, and servants,

are all under his government. I may therefore trust, and not be afraid. He is almighty to fulfil his offices and all his promises: almighty to protect his from all enemies, miseries, sin, Satan, death, and hell: and come what will, he is almighty to make all things produce good, as he said, Gen. xv. 1. My dear brother, you know something of this blessed life, but there is more than you have yet learned. Let Mrs. S. bring her case and leave it with the Lord: all will be well, only trust. Pray for more trust. For as faith increases, it will open to you most blessed views of an Omega, who is, fourthly, the God of glory. He gives it, for he is the Author of eternal salvation. Read John xvii.; mind what he there prays for, and he has all power in heaven and earth to bestow it. The whole company around the throne are ascribing to him all their glory, as you see, Rev. v. 9. to the end. I join them. So do you. Thanks be to him for his unspeakable grace. Through the year, trust our Alpha and Omega.

W. R.

LETTER XLVIII.

MANY many thanks to Mr. and to Mrs. T. for their remembrance of us this year. I am ashamed I have not acknowledged your favour sooner; but truly, Sir, I grow very lazy and good for nothing. It is high time I was turned out of the vineyard, and any other master but mine would have had nothing to do with me long ago. I loathe myself, and stand wondering daily at his kindness. Never was self

lower, and his loveliness higher, than in this new year. Though we are but just entered on it, yet he has already vouchsafed us some delightful Pisgah-views. It has been for many years a custom with me to have a text, a sort of a watch-word, something very short, easy to be remembered, and which may serve the believer to feast upon for a twelve-month. I have found this very useful to myself, and so have others. Our text for this year, 1772, was, "Christ is all:" he has all the fulness of salvation in him as God-man; and he has it to the glory of the Father, and of the Holy Spirit. For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell, as the head for the use of his members: and it pleased the Holy Spirit to testify of his fulness in the Scripture; and it pleases him, by his grace, to bring believers to use it, and to live upon it. This is the true saving work of grace. All other experience is not worth a farthing. The Holy Ghost comes to pull down self and to exalt Christ, and this he does effectually. He enlightens the understanding, and convinces it that Christ is the one Sun of the spiritual world. He sends his scholars to Christ, and to none but Christ, to be taught the things of God. He brings them humbled to the Saviour's feet, where they sit to hear his words. Thus he glorifies their divine Prophet; and in the matter of teaching, he makes Christ all. The Bible, and ministers, and means, are only to lead to Christ, that out of his fulness they may receive lesson upon lesson, line upon line.

Methinks I hear Mrs. T. ask, 'But how shall I know that I am one of Christ's scholars, and that he

is my teacher?" My dear friend, you are to know it from what you have learned. You cannot be certain of it any other way; and he would have you to look at his truth, and to try yourself by it. When you think of your fallen state, in which you inherit a corrupt nature, and can in it do nothing but sin—when guilt is in your conscience and fear in your heart—what is it that brings you any relief? to what do you look for pardon, and from whence do you expect peace with God? Your answer will show that the Lord God, our Prophet, has been teaching you.

Methinks I hear you reply, (for I have heard you say it,) 'Why, to be sure, I have no hope but in that sacrifice of the Lamb of God which perfecteth for ever, and in that righteousness of his which justifieth from all things.' This is the true object of salvation. This, and nothing else. Christ is all. There is no pardon but in his blood, no justification but in his obedience, no heaven but what is the free gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Christ is all.

Thus far all is well. 'But the comfort of this, the comfort to know it is mine.' There Mrs. T. has her objection ready. My dear Madam, show me the text which says, "He that is comforted shall be saved;" or, that faith consists in knowing that salvation is mine. You are called upon to trust the work of Christ, and to trust for yourself upon the free warrant of God's faithful word. Rest here, giving credit to God's promise of salvation to all that will receive it, and I will lay my life for it you will never want comforting, and soon be satisfied you are a saved sinner. If you rest not here, get comfort,

it will not be true nor lasting : and your application to yourself will be only the act of your own mind, and will prove as changeable as the wind.

‘ But you would not have me to go on in a dark uncomfortable way, not knowing whither I am going?’ No, Mrs. T., I want to lead you to light and comfort in the direct road. Christ is the way—look more at him, and less at yourself; trust more to him, and less to your faith. Be always thinking of your emptiness, and of his fulness. Meditate on him, pray to him. You cannot be thus employed about the Sun, without being enlightened by his rays, and cherished by his warm beams. When people are very cold within doors, and see the sun shining sweetly, they do not ask, ‘ Is it my sun? May I go out and walk in this noon-day brightness, and get myself warm with this delightful sunshine? Is it for me?’ Yes, for you. Whoever will may take Christ for their pardon, Christ for their righteousness, Christ for heaven, and for all they want till they come there. You are willing; therefore Christ and all he has is yours. Now, Mrs. T. what do you say to this? Why, say you, ‘ To be sure I do build upon this foundation; but I still lack many things.’ Very well, I am glad you do—the more the better. Whatever you lack it is in Christ’s fulness, and he has it for you: so that here will be a blessed intercourse between you and Christ, and a holy friendship in giving and receiving. Every moment you want something. Christ says, Here it is, come to me for it: I can deny you nothing; be it for temporals, Psalm xxxiv. 10.—or for spirituals, Eph. i. 3.—or for eternal, Rom vi. 23. : all is yours.

This is living by the faith of the Son of God, and it is the best way to live. For you cannot be thus receiving every moment out of Christ's fulness, but you must experience that he is yours, which will make your faith practical and certain. You will then have done disputing about your interest in Christ. While you are making use of him, you can no more question his being yours, than you can whether the meat is yours which you have been eating to-day.

Thus you see, Christ is all in time, and all in eternity. May he have his honour in little H. Do but trust him, and you will see what miracles he will do for you. My wife joins me in this advice.

W. R.

LETTER XLIX.

YOU may depend upon this, as one of the sweetest axioms in divinity: whatever it is which makes you pleased with yourself, is not true grace; and whatever makes you displeased with yourself, is not true grace, unless it brings you humbly to Christ, and makes you put more trust and confidence in him. The good Lord teach you these things practically. I have learned them by long experience; though I know but little of them, yet I am getting on in the school of Christ, and hope soon to be on the lowest form, for there we learn most and fastest. We there depend entirely on the teachings of our divine Master, who reveals the secrets of his kingdom to none but babes. As a new-born babe depends entirely on the care of its parents, so must we on God our prophet and teacher. And when we are brought

thus humble, he will make known to us what he hideth from the wise and prudent. I would therefore wish you to be the humblest man upon earth, not only that you might know most, but also that you might love most. He that feels his sins and miseries, his vileness and unprofitableness, with the deepest loathings of them, is in the fittest way to love Christ. If he be an experienced believer, the feelings of those sins, miseries, &c. will make Christ more precious: the more he finds of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, he will trust the more in Christ: the more misery he knows he deserves, salvation from it will make Jesus more dear and lovely. His vileness sets forth Christ's grace: his unworthiness, the worthiness of the Lamb: his unprofitableness, the sufficiency of Jesus, who is all in all.

When you are going to measure Christ's high grace, do not get upon a mountain, but go down into a valley; lower still, to the depth from which David cried; lower still, to the belly of hell, from which Jonah cried; and from thence take the heights of Jesus' grace, and from thence see how lovely he is. When the Spirit of Jesus is humbling you, showing you your deceitful wicked heart, laying open your ruined nature in all its abominable workings, has not this often discouraged you, my friend? Instead of trusting Christ, and loving Christ more, did it not weaken your faith, and so lessen your love, and thereby counteract the gracious purposes of Jesus' Spirit? May he teach you better, that every future sense of sin may greatly endear to you the Lamb of God, whose blood cleanseth from all sin. Depend upon it, that only is the true humbling for sin, that makes his blood more precious. W. R.

LETTER L.

Lambeth, Dec. 3, 1767.

DEAR Sir,—Mr. F. informed me of your commission to buy the ‘Law and Gospel.’ I make you a present of the ‘Life of Faith.’ I have also sent you a book of inestimable value, which I was inclined to do, because it affords me an opportunity to introduce myself to you, and give you a word of advice on your going into orders. It is a great undertaking, and I will speak freely to you upon it, as, were I in your circumstances, I should have wished some one would have dealt with me. The Lord God make it a blessing to you.

First, I would have you, Sir, to consider one qualification for the ministry indispensably necessary, and that is, the knowledge of yourself: you cannot teach this till you have been taught, nor farther than you have been taught it. Consider what is your state: is not sin, misery, helplessness, your condition in Adam? Are not you by nature a child of wrath? Mr. M. do you know this? Have you ever felt the plague of your heart? Have you ever seen the legion of lusts within you, every one of them ready to take up arms and rebel against God? Are you sensible how often they have drawn you into actual rebellion? And do you know what will be the end of this state without a Saviour? Think, Sir, how can you preach these things, if you have never felt them? O beg of God, then, to make you sensible how much you want a Saviour, that you may know

how to address yourself to others upon the same subject.

Secondly, Another indispensable qualification is, the knowledge of Christ, to know his person—God-man—his work, in his life and death, as our whole salvation; made ours whenever his Spirit enables us to receive it, and enjoyed as ours so far as by faith we dare believe in him. This is the doctrine to be preached. How can a man preach it who does not know it, or who does not believe it? Try yourself here, Mr. M. Is he, in whose name, and to preach whom, you are ordained—is he true and very God—the self-existent Jehovah? Is there salvation in none other person or thing? God help you not to be deceived in that most essential doctrine.

A third thing is absolutely necessary, namely, the knowledge of God's word. I send you this little blessed book, in reading which you will learn yourself—here is your true picture—and here is the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal. In reading and hearing the Scriptures, the Spirit sets in with the word, and shows the sinner himself, and then shows him the Saviour, and enables him to believe unto salvation. All the teaching of God's Spirit is in and by the word: he accompanies nothing but his own truth with his own blessing, and that he does so bless, that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Are these things so? Is the Bible the word of God? Does it make the believer wise unto salvation? Is it profitable for doctrine, for reproof, &c. O, Sir, what are you doing, that other books are so much read, and the Bible so neglected? Will you learn from a poor

penitent? Indeed I repent, and God forgive my mis-spent time in sciences and classics. I saw my folly two and twenty years ago, and have since studied nothing but the Bible; and I assure you, Sir, I am got but a little way. I see such things before me which I know but in part, that I am pressing on, and I wish for some of my lost time to spend in this blessed study. Take warning. Prize my little present: read it over and over: it is valuable as coming from my heart's love, but infinitely more so as the copy of Christ's love. You cannot read it too much: wear it out in reading, and I promise you a much neater and finer edition: but the finest is that which the Spirit writes upon the heart. O that he may write a very fair copy upon yours.

Fourthly, Your next thing is to know your office: to what are you ordained? If you know not yourself, and know not Jesus, nor his word, how can you possibly discharge your office? In these things the chief part of it consists. A minister, unacquainted with himself, can never show his people what they are in themselves. What can he say of Christ, who is not acquainted with him? or how can he preach the word who never studied it, or who never had his understanding opened to understand the Scriptures? Think of these things, Sir, and meditate much upon them. Weigh well your office; examine well your call to it. Are you enabled faithfully to declare the whole counsel of God?—with boldness, to tell sinners their guilt and danger; which will make all the unconverted your bitter enemies,—with clearness, to set forth the way of salvation, through our surety, God-Jesus,—with evidence, to show the work of

the Spirit in convincing of sin ; in working faith in Jesus' word ; to rely upon his blood and righteousness ; and enabling the believer to live upon the fullness of Jesus' grace, receiving out of it grace for grace every moment for all the purposes of spiritual life ? And that you may do this successfully, in spite of all opposition, are you made willing to practise what you are to preach ? That is the best sermon which the minister preaches all the week. Nothing is so powerful as example. Blessed is he who lives out of the pulpit what he says in it, and knows his doctrine to be truly experience : so may it be with you.

W. R.

LETTER LI.

To W—— T——, Esq.

Feb. 20, 1784.

MY very dear Friend,—You made up by its rich contents, when it came, for the long time your letter was in coming. I am much beholden to you for its companions—both tasting of brotherly love, which completes the banquet ; thanks be to God and to you. Be not offended that I put him first ; because I owe to him the knowledge of you, the love of you, and from him proceeds all intercourse of love between us. While we keep him in sight in our friendship, it will be a mutual blessing. For this I am praying ; and you know our God is famous for hearing and for answering prayer. Indeed, what he hears and answers, is first his own : for he gives us the spirit

of prayer—we know not of ourselves what to ask—and when we do know, we cannot ask aright; but he enables us to feel our wants, to ask a supply of them in faith, and he helps our infirmities in asking: when we have done our best, he teaches us to present our petitions for acceptance into the hands of our great Mediator. As they come from us, they are nothing worth; but when Christ makes them his prayers, then they go up with much incense, and come down with abundant blessings. Was it not so the morning you were at prayer? You wanted a family Bible. It was only ask and have. Here it is—God's gift. And mind, you may have any thing of him as cheap as this: for he giveth liberally to all askers. I wish you may be as humble an asker as he is a liberal giver. I have complied with your request, in writing your name and mine in the Bible—in which also, you desired me “to write some directions how to read it.” This I have not done; because the subject of prayer is the whole Bible. All the volume is to be prayed over as you read it, and then I must have transcribed it. But though I cannot, need not do this; yet I will lay open my heart unto you, and will let you into my own practice. Something like this is my constant prayer; and, as far as you believe, it will be yours. May you use it with more faith than I ever did:—

O thou Spirit of wisdom and revelation, be with me whenever I read thy holy word: testify to me in it, and by it, of Christ Jesus, who he is, and what he is to me; and glorify the Father's love in him. Open thou mine eyes to see the wondrous things revealed in it upon these subjects, that I may understand them

in thy light, and that my judgment of them may be the same with thine: I beseech thee also to enable me to mix faith with what I do understand; and what through thy teaching I am enabled to believe aright, that help me to receive in the love of the truth. O God, fulfil thy promise—put thy blessed word into my inward parts: write it upon my heart. And what I am taught to love, grant me power to practise; that thy new covenant promise may in me have its full effect, and I may be in heart and life cast into the mould and form of thy word—thus becoming a real living edition of the Bible. Make it my daily study. Render it my constant delight. Let my meditation of it be always sweet. O thou holy and eternal Spirit, witness thus to thine own record—and let me experience it to be the power of God, as well as the truth of God. In this dependence upon thee in the use of it, let me be daily growing—until, by the will of God, I shall have served mine own generation; and then let it be the last act of my life, to seal the truth of thy testimony concerning Jesus. Let me find thy witness true in the hour of death, and beyond death all the promises made good to me, through Jesus Christ, in life everlasting. Amen, and amen. W. R.

FINIS.











